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ARENA MAGAZINE

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NEWSFLASH!

Youngblood "Strikes" Again...

Next year, 93 that is, will be another big one for fans of Rob Liefeld's *Youngblood*, with the release of *Youngblood: Strike File*, an all-new four-part mini-series spotlighting individual team members in solo action. Set to debut in March 1993, each issue of the series will feature two ten-page stories. Creator Liefeld and **Jae Lee** (*Namor*) will set the tempo for the series in the first issue, with solo stories featuring Youngblood's most popular characters, Diehard and Chapel. The remaining issues in the series will feature the artwork of David Williams, Jason Pearson and young newcomer, Chap Yaep. Unlike "spotlight" series of the past, however, this won't be a case of little-known characters. According to *Strike File* editor Eric Stephenson, the series will focus on "the characters the fans have requested to see in solo adventures, by some of the hottest artists in the business." Stephenson also added that the series could be expanded to an ongoing schedule if sales were good.

Cry For Dawn Presents Offerings II

Offerings II is a fresh new title from the wild men at Cry For Dawn. In *Offerings II*, Lagen attempts to run the gauntlet of Kalt, God of the Blood Feast, in the wildest 12 page romp through Hell on Earth this world has seen since the Mongols overran Europe! If he wins, he will become King for a year and enjoy all the fringe benefits which come with the exalted title. If he loses, more than just his life and soul lie forfeit. There's an old saying, "He who bargains with the priests of Kalt, bends over for the beast, and prepares his heart for the feast..."

Zeth returns from issue one and penetrates the inner workings of the dread Cult of the Desirne, discussing life, art, and the true meaning of inter-species sexual relationships with the Wolf King's corsehare. Also, Ananda, the ultimate bitch-tease seductress, takes a liking to our favorite Zen lunatic and attempts to indoctrinate Zeth into the tantric realms of pleasure, pain, and the true meaning of cult living.

Dark Myth continues as Raman, the second-rate pit-fighter from issue one, transcends his usual apathy and has the fight of his life in the pits of Rythcore, surprising even himself. It's said, "A man's got to know his limitations," but in this issue Rman finds that he doesn't have any, which impresses the hell out of the Emperor...He's looking for a few good men...

Offerings II is fully toned black & white executed in lush ink-wash with a fully painted cover. Ships in December.

About the cover..
Larry Stroman and Todd Johnson primers their latest project "Tribe".

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LOOK OUT! HERE COMES THE PUBLISHER!

This market is a wonderful place to be a publisher if you can find the niche of readers to sustain a fair print run. So far, we've received nothing but praise about *Arena Magazine*. A No-Price Guide fanzine is a scarce item at this time, but we would rather spend our time reporting on news and offering up-to-date interviews and spotlights on all types of publisher (when available) than checking at the local comic shop to see if Spider-Man #1 has fallen in price or if all of the Image books has tripled. That's why we have *Overstreet's Price Guide*.

This issue offers all-new columns and features. We've got Lurene Haines' "Getting into the Business" explaining the ins and outs of the comic industry; then, "Spotlight On..." focuses on comic books that may or maynot be getting the exposure we feel that they should; also, you'll find "Brit Bits", our new British reporter, Paul Birch, has come through with all kinds of information from across the way.

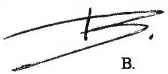
Gaming has its own cover and book this month. If this is something that you gamers like, let us know and we'll line up enough covers to do this every month. It's sort of an oddity that we cover role-playing games but don't manufacture them. It was brought to my attention that many of the gaming magazines are owned by gaming manufactures, so we're putting forth an effort to acquire more gaming news and interviews for future issues. Bear with us.

Early '93 looks bright for *Arena Magazine*. January brings to you our Yearbook Edition with a beautiful trading card illustrated by **Daerick Gross**. February offers an interview with **Jerry Ordway** and **Al Gordon** who are premiering their new Image title and we'll be inserting a *WildStar: Sky Zero* trading card! March has an interview and Wolverine cover by **Joe Quesada**, the new *X-Factor* artist for Marvel.

Mystery News: *People are finally starting to pay attention to us! Because of this, currently in the works is a special insert that a lot of fans will just have to have! The papers aren't signed yet so I can't let the cat out of the bag, so to speak, but it's pretty much a done deal. I can say that it's like no other insert by* ***any*** *other magazine and it's going to feature characters from the hottest comic company out there!*

So, hang. Things are just starting to happen around here.

Until next month . . .



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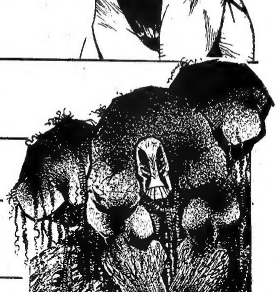

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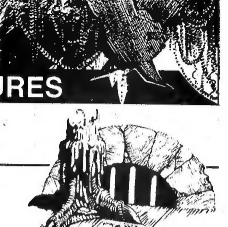

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I'M BAAAAACK! THE ALMIGHTY EDITOR

Yo. Did anybody miss me last month?

Figures. Oh, well. As you may have noticed, our *'head writer'* Jerry Smith, critic extraordinaire, filled this spot (and more so) last issue. I didn't really mind too much. Heck, I was busy, y'know? Editing and stuff. You know how it goes. But I ain't here to ramble on like some harebrained buffoon, even though I'm allowed to if I want. That's what an editorial is for, y'see. Stream of consciousness stuff. It's really cool.

Has anybody noticed the dang amount of negativity and antagonism in comics just yesterday? I mean, every time I turned around, somebody somewhere was saying something about some other body some other where. It's wild in an utterly pathetic sort of way, if you know what I mean. It's like, I was at the Atlanta DragonCon a couple of months ago and there was this panel of big name artists - I'm not saying any names...okay, I will - **John Byrne** and **Todd McFarlane**, and they just started going at each other! I hate to say it, but from my point of view, the Byrnemeister started discreetly enough and proceeded to lambast Image and Liefeld and McFarlane and delivered the whole spiel in his own discretionary, humorous custom (if this guy wasn't an artist, he'd be a comedian). McFarlane's retorts were not as biting but chewed at the fringes of Byrne's nerves enough to provoke subtle hints of latent hostilities. Tom Lyle cleared out. Well, it was resolved amiably enough and no more mention was made it seems...until now.

Being behind the scenes, I've heard a lot of negative comments and witnessed some dismal attitudes. It's enough to bring a guy down, I can teli you. Hmmm. I just did.

A good attitude is sometimes difficult to maintain in this industry. What with all the luck, trends, flukes, big fame and fortune by the whims of chance, backbiting and raw business dealings. Anyway, I'd like to thank some positive people who have, unaware, helped me change my outlook lately. They've emanated enthusiasm, good business, open honesty, and concern for the industry and the fans. And that is what's really important. *Thank you, Val Semeiks. Thank you, Lurene Haines. Thank you, Al Gordon. Thank you, Todd Johnson. Thank you, Jerry Ordway. Thank you, Hank Kanalz.* These people have re-instilled my faith in the comic book market. It's a good time. There's a hopeful future. All is well.

Ciao. I remain . . . JOE MARTIN

ARENA MAGAZINE

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Writing: Address all submissions to Arena Magazine, 264 Main Street, Florence, Kentucky, 41042. Please enclose a S.A.S.E. Submissions must be typed, double spaced. Keep a copy of your manuscript. Only send copies. Always put your name, complete address, and phone number on each page of article.

Art: Address all submissions to Arena Magazine, 264 Main Street, Florence, Kentucky, 41042. Send good copies of stats please. Put your name and address on the back of each piece of art. Always include an S.A.S.E. if you wish your materials returned.

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ARENA MAGAZINE

'93 IS LOOKING GREAT ALREADY!

COMIC NEWS

Acid Rain Studios News

If you're looking for something a tad bit different for your customers of the nocturnal persuasion, then look no further! Written and illustrated by Mark Paniccia, the *Vampire Lingerie Fantasy Catalog* is just what those readers may be hungering for. It's an illustrative listing of seductive nightwear for the sophisticated Undead modeled by a stunning collection of some of vampiredom's most beautiful fang-toothed women. This catalog comes hot off the trail of the *Vampire Bikini Comic Calendar* by the selfsame creator. Special limited signed and numbered editions are also available.

Caliber Press News

Silverline Announces More Titles Packaged For Caliber Press

Silverline Productions, packagers of popular titles such as *Cat & Mouse*, *Silverstorm*, and *Pendulum* is announcing the line-up of titles being packaged for Caliber Press. Silverline is composed of Roland Mann as Editorial Director and Steven Butler as Art Director. Mann is best known for his writing on titles such as *Cat & Mouse*, *Planet of the Apes*, and *Elementals*. Butler is the current artist of Marvel's Silver Sable series.

The new title added to Caliber's imprint is *Sirens*, a tale of voodoo, undead, and the women involved in trapping helpless victims to the occult world in New Orleans. Written by horror writer Sidney Williams, it is illustrated by John Drury and Chuck Bordell.

Most of the Silverline titles will appear under the Gauntlet imprint of Caliber. Joining two other titles announced already, *Krey* and *Marauder*, will be the all new series of *Silverstorm*, *Switchblade*, *Chivalry*, and *Tooth & Nail*. *Tooth & Nail* originally appeared in the very popular series of Cat & Mouse published by Malibu and have been repeatedly requested by fans for their own title. No creative team has been firmed up yet but an announcement should be made soon regarding the *Tooth & Nail* artists. Mann has already finished the scripts for the first three issues.

Caliber Publisher Gary Reed said that working with the Silverline Production team "has been very enjoyable thus far and we look for a long relationship. Roland has a lot of good ideas and we have mapped out how many of the Silverline characters will be fitting into the Gauntlet universe yet maintain creator control and ownership." As with virtually all of Caliber's titles, creators maintain full control of their characters including all rights of ownership.

Sandman Artist & Co-Creator Teams Up

Mike Drigenberg, co-creator of *Sandman*, possibly the most acclaimed character in comics as well as one of the initial artists on the Sandman series will be joining forces with two other creators to bring forth a new series, *Without a Mask*, coming soon from Caliber Press.

The psychological super hero series, which is written by Shawn Segler will feature art by Drigenberg with finished by Susie Lee. Drigenberg will also provide covers for the series. It is scheduled to run eight issues and will be printed under the Caliber banner. "Although most of out titles relating to superheroes are under the Gauntlet imprint," said Publisher Gary Reed, "we felt that this title was not the standard fare which Gauntlet will be represented by. It is a much darker and sometimes surreal and silly look at the genre."

The focus of the story will be on Colin Stanhope, a man torn between the ideals that his father, a psychotic vigilante, has pressed unto him and hid desires to lead a normal life. However, Colin finds that although he may not want any part of his deceased father's life, his father's enemies can't or don't want to believe it.

Writer Shawn Segler says that the series will be a delicate balance of satire and drama. "There will be a profound sense of pressure on Colin to be remade in his father's image and carry the 'I am the living personification of vengeance' mode, yet Colin must also deal with his father's former patners who have drifted from the standard of super hero conduct. It is the story of Colin's journey of self-discovery in a world that is basically hostile to his goal."

For more on Caliber, see this issue's Spotlight On... on pages 22 - 53.

Eclipse News

Dragons At Christmas

Anne McCaffrey's bestselling fantasy novel is available as a trade paperback. The delightful and dramatic story of Pern and its inhabitants has charmed readers as both series of novels and as a three part graphic adaptation. Now, Eclipse collects all three issues of its immensely popular *Dragonflight* series into one volume. The collection features a new cover by painter Mark Ferrari, highlighting the beauty of the dragons in flight. Join Lessa in the adventure of her life, as she emerges from servitude to her rightful position of leader and partner to Dragonrider F'Lar. Experience firsthand the dreadful scourge of the Thread, an astronomical oddity that threatens all life on Pern, and can only be destroyed by the fire of the dragon's breath as they dodge and parry the deadly burning spirals. It is a story of courage and of love, and will remain in your heart for many years.

Adapted by Brynne Stephens with art by Lela Dowling, Cynthia Matin and Fred Von Tobel. Ships in December.

DC News

Dark Knight's Bane

In the style of *Batman: Sword of Azrael*, a new major supporting character is introduced to the Batman mythos in *Batman: Vengeance of Bane*. Only this time, it's a villain.

Bane is the sole survivor of the Venom Experiments, which were first revealed in *Legends of the Dark Knight #16-20*, as an attempt to create drug-enhanced killing machines. He has spent a lifetime as the toughest inmate in the worst prison on the South American island of Santa Prisca, where he acquired his berserk strength, a savage, calculating intellect, and an unparalleled megalomania. He ultimately sets his sights on Gotham City, and goes gunning for the Dark Knight.

Batman: Vengeance of Bane is written by Chuck Dixon, author of all three *Robin* miniseries, and pencils are by Grahan Nolan, best known for his work in *Detective* and *Hawkworld*. Eduardo Barreto, artist of *Batman: Master of the Future* and *Martian Manhunter: American Secrets* provides the inks. Ships in December.

Green Arrow - A Year of Wonder

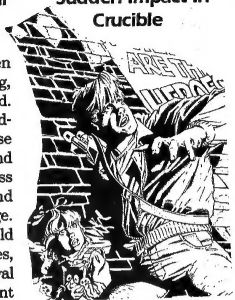
It was a time of flux; when one kind of world was dying, and another strove to rebuild. A new awareness was spreading across America, a sense that people mattered, and that they weren't powerless against the corporate and political corruption of the age. Into this brave new world emerged a hero for the times, one who evoked a medieval legend of another movement to "fight the power."

Green Arrow: The Wonder Year is a 4-issue miniseries in the tradition of *Batman: Year One*, telling of the earliest days of the Emerald Archer's career as a true hero of the common man. Like the mythical Robin Hood, Green Arrow is a hero forced into existence by the challenges of the world around him - a world rife with greed and injustice.

Writer/layout artist Mike Grell and inker Gray Morrow join to offer an in-depth look at the influences that shaped the character of Oliver Queen, and the events that evolved him from a careless corporate boor into a streetwise, hard-edged vigilante.

Green Arrow: The Wonder Year ships in December.

Sudden Impact In Crucible



A new era for Impact begins in 1993 with the January debut of *Crucible #1*. Crucible is a 6-issue miniseries chronicling an eight-year span in the lives of three Impact heroes: the Shield, the Black Hood, and the Comet. Cataclysmic circumstance draw these heroes together, and their lives become inextricably linked. Events of this turbulent time result in startling, unprecedented changes in the Impact Universe, as each hero attempts to confront the vast changes in the world around him and in themselves.

In the exciting first issue, 17-year old Nate Cray (the Black Hood), receives a vision of the future from an enigmatic tribune known as the Tomorrow Men. This vision includes images of an evil, deadly Comet - who apparently died at the end of the *Comet* series - somehow completely depraved and totaly bereft of humanity. The Comet is shown to Cray as the greatest potential threat the world will ever face. With the remaining Crusaders missing, no power on Earth may be able to stop the corrupt Comet.

Compelled to assume the mantle of Earth's protector,

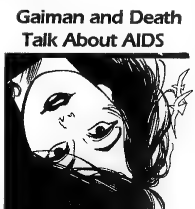
Cray leaves behind the life he has known as he sets out in search of a man the world has long presumed dead - racing against the countdown to impending doom.

Nate Cray will fail miserably.

And the Impact Universe will change forever.

Written by Brian Augustyn and Mark Waid, layouts & cover pencils by Joe Quesada with pencils by Chuck Wojtkiewicz and inks supplied by Jim Palmiotti. Ships in December.

Gaiman and Death Talk About AIDS



December is World AIDS Awareness Month, and DC Comics launches a major campaign for greater awareness of the widespread impact of this all-pervasive disease.

During December, a full page ad promoting AIDS awareness will run in its nonmature reader titles, featuring Robin, Flash, the New Titans, Blue Beetle, Booster Gold and others. The ads are designed as vignettes to educate readers and stimulate inquiry on some of the facts and fallacies surrounding HIV (the virus that can lead to AIDS). Among the creators contributing are Rick Burchett, Travis Charest, Tom Grummett, Klaus Janson, Tom Lyle, Joe Staton, Al Vey, and others.

In additon, three mature-reader titles shipping in December (*Sandman #46, Hellblazer #62* and *Shade, The Changing Man #32*) will include a bound-in 8 page insert on AIDS awareness. The insert, written by Sandman author Neil Gaiman and illustrated by award-winning artist Dave McKean, features the character Death offerinf readers frank and often explicit facts regarding many aspects of AIDS and HIV, along with guidelines on low-risk behavior.

"This is a public service," says Gaiman. "No one has to read it, but those of us involved in the project aren't interested in reaching only the converted. It's about education and common sense. It's about being sensible. Death is hosting because she's probably one of the most sensible characters in comics. Who better to argue for life than Death?"

Included with the ads and the insert are telephone numbers for contacting the Natinal AIDS Hotline, and local numbers for New York City and Los Angeles.

DC feels it is important to be part of AIDS Awareness Month. This campaign is an educational service to DC's readership. It is their hope that these ads will serves as an inspiration to discussion and action to DC's readers and beyond.

The New Vertigo Line

DC's new *Vertigo* line dramatically expands its output of innovative comics for the sophisticated, mature reader. *Vertigo* combines established favorites such as *Sandman, Swamp Thing,* and *Hellblazer*, with an array of ground-breaking new titles, executed with the same high creative standards.

DC, the acknowledged leader in this market, is responding to reader demand by adding nearly two dozen ongoing titles, limited series and graphic novels to its formidable core line, which incudes *Sandman, Hellblazer, Doom Patrol, Animal Man, Swamp Thing,* and *Shade , The Changing Man*.

The first two new Vertigo titles to be offered (in March) are *Death: The High Cost of Living*, a 3-issue miniseries by Neil Gaiman and *Shade* artist Chris Bachalo and *Enigma*, a ground-breaking 8-issue miniseries by *Shade* writer Pete Milligan and *Kid Eternity* artist Duncan Fegredo.

Vertigo increases the presence of sophisticated comics as well as expanding its variety in the comic marketplace. "We believe the sophistication and diversity of the Vertigo line is the future of comics," says Karen Berger, Group Editor of the Vertigo books. "One of our goals is to bring more readers, particularly adults, into comic shops."

Dark Horse News

Baron And Rude...Nexus: Alien Justice

The long-awaited reunion of Nexus creators Mike Baron and Steve "the Dude" Rude continues with "Return to Thuneworld," the first issue of *Nexus: Alien Justice #1*, an all-new three-issue miniseries! When Nexus and his buddy Dave journey to Dave's home planet in search of long-lost friends, they find that things have changed for the worse since their last visit: the once thriving world has been ravaged by pollution and famine that seems to be spreading from a mysterious factory. Is this merely another case of industry run amuck, or do ancient Thune legends of a planet-devouring creature somehow figure into the picture? All this, plus one big, four-armed surprise, courtesy of Baron, Rude, inker Gary Martin and colorist Noelle Giddings. Ships in December.

Flower Power Future

What do you get when you cross a hardboiled private investigator with a sentient robot? None other than Rusty Spade, metaphysical metal detective! What starts out as a simple missing-persons case soon leads Rusty down a dizzying path of intrigue, high finance and corporate crime, all set against a futuristic backdrop in which entire star systems are bought and sold on Wall Street.

No science fiction or mystery fan will want to miss this series: it deftly blends the best elements of both genres, with just the right touch of humor. And we guarantee that the rich, hand painted colors will blow your socks off! *The Blue Lily* is written, illustrated, lettered, colored and designed by the multitalented Angus McKie (Heavy Metal). Ships in December.

Check Out The Fat Dog

Do you like hamburger on a stick? Do you like your martians nude? Do you like arc-welding suits? If so, seek help. If not, check out *Fat Dog Mendoza*. Dark Horse Comics is pleased to present a dog that you can really sink your teeth into! Not since the Terminator has there been a more suave and sophisticated man-dog-o'-action like this one! You'll thrill to the wild adventures of this conversing, corpulentm consort-killing canine as he takes off in the first comic of his very own! Join Fat Dog and his crime-fighting friends, The Whoosh, Siamese Moms, and a host of other characters. This issue also includes a special origin episode! We dare you to enter the sick and twisted reality of *Fat Dog Mendoza* that is *entirely* Scott's fault. You'll be glad you did! These excellently crafted tales are created, written, and illustrated by Scott (*Loose Teeth*) Musgrove. Ships in December.

Dark Horse Vinyl Kit Features King Kong

Sculpted by master artist Randy Bowen, the Dark Horse King Kong figure kit stands a majestic 16 1/2" tall. Officially licensed from Turner Entertainment, this is the original Kong, the Eight Wonder of the World, the monstrous beast that terrified movie audiences back in 1933.

This gargantuan figure depicts the giant simian in a classic pose, clutching the woman of his dreams in his hairy paw in a moment of victory atop Skull Mountain. The kit features a detailed base inscribed with the King Kong logo, plus beautifully detailed box art by painter John Bolton. The Dark Horse King Kong vinyl figure kit comes unassembled and unpainted. Retail price for this outstanding vinyl figure kit is $79.95 U.S.. The King Kong vinyl figure kit ships in November.

According to Bowen, this is just the first in a line of vinyl kits from Dark Horse. Future kits will feature movie monsters, creatures and heroes of the past, present and future, as well as characters from the Dark Horse stable.

Malibu News

New Protectors One-Shot

Malibu Comics spins off another *Protectors* superhero when *Airman #1* debuts in January in full color. This new one-shot is written by regular *Protectors'* writer R.A. Jones and illustrated by Matt Reynolds and James Pascoe who did the cover.

Airman will go deeper into the story of Drake Stevens. Writer R.A. Jones said, "It will give a little more insight into the character of Airman himself than I was able to in the first six issues of *Protectors*." Jones also plans on continuing the expansion of the Protectors universe. "I'm hopeful that even more of them will be given their own one-shots," he said. "I'd like to see some of the characters catch on enough with readers to warrant getting their own series outside of *Protectors*."

Protectors has recently been extended to a regular monthly series based on the successful sell-throughs of *Protectors #1* and *Ferret #1*.

"Airman may not have the strongest natural powers of the Protectors, but his uniquely engineered uniform, his enhanced vision and his unerring sense of direction make him a frightful figure to most criminals," said Editor-In-Chief Chris Ulm.

Airman will bring a mystery of sorts to the *Protectors* storyline, with the first appearance of Thresher, a new supra-normal hero. Jones said, "He's not human exactly...he's the product of a very unusual mixed marriage." In *Airman*, Thresher is taken prisoner by a villain called the Conqueror - who Airman knows from the past.

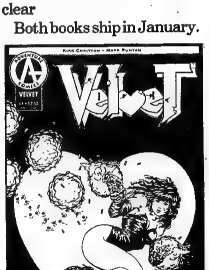
More Malibu Books From Adventure

In addition to the *Airman* one-shot, Malibu's Adventure line offers two more titles for January, *Demon's Tails #1* and *Velvet #1*.

Demon's Tails #1 (of 4) is written by Roland Mann (*Arrow*) and illustrated by Paul Pelletier (*Ex-Mutants*) and Tom Romano. It stars the brown furry guy from *Cat & Mouse*, finally in his own story! When cultists offer a sacrifice to him, Keith Grayson, alias Demon, gets a little upset. On top of that, Demon hasn't seen his family in several years and when his best friend shows up with bad news...well, things are a little different than he remembered.

In *Velvet #1*, we've got writer Kirk Chritton (founding editor of *Comics Career Newsletter*) and Marvel artist Mark Runyan, telling us a tale about the year 2019. America is still recovering from the effects of twin earthquakes. Organized crime has taken control of the public government. If the price is right, America is yours for the taking. One free agent, however, refuses to play that game. Standing for principle over profit, Velvet will work for anyone...if her conscience is clear

Both books ship in January.



The Image Update (as always)

Image's Underbelly - A Dark Place To Be

Darker Image #1 is an anthology of gritty, treacherous and violent stories from the underbelly of the Image Universe - *Darker Image*. Jim Lee, Sam Kieth and Rob Liefeld will showcase their respective new characters - Deathblow, The Maxx and Bloodwulf - in *Darker Image #1*, this twenty-four page color monthly book. Each issue will be polybagged and include one of three trading cards from each of the creators.

Bloodwulf (Rob Liefeld) - If you love Lobo, you'll hate Bloodwulf! As one of the high-

est paid bounty hunters in the galaxy, Bloodwulf's adventures bring him into conflict with everything (and everyone) from dinosaurs to evil corporations to guys with arms as big as couches!

The story starts off on a small scale with Bloodwulf destroying an entire planet and things get even more outrageous from there. Unlike anything ever done by creator Rob Liefeld, Bloodwulf makes a fitting addition to Darker Image: he's violent, he's got a nasty sense of humor, and he doesn't appreciate cracks about his hair!

The Maxx (Sam Kieth & Wm. Messner-Loebs) - Sam Kieth debuts his first Image series, written by **Bill Loebs**. Maxx is the underdog of the Image group. He's not the strongest or the smartest of the Image heroes, but he is definitely the toughest! He thinks he's in the outback of Australia fighting giant monsters and deadly creatures with a jungle girl sent to help him. She believes he is a homeless guy living in the present day with mental problems. The problem is, who's correct?

Deathblow (Jim Lee) - A killer for an anonymous intelligence agency learns a fatal illness shall soon take his own life. Seeking peace and salvation at a mysterious monastery, he quickly becomes caught in a whirlwind of death and mayhem and must rely upon the old ways to survive.

Darker Image #1 will be debuting new characters in their first Image Universe appearances. If response is good, these individual characters will debut in their own Image title.

Spawn Gets More Guests

She's called Angela. The last time she destroyed a Spawn it was 800 years ago, but she hasn't lost her touch. She's as beautiful as she ever was, and every bit as deadly. Now, she's out to kill the current Spawn. *And she's going to succeed.*

Says who? **Neil Gaiman**, that's who. "The best part of Image Comics," explains McFarlane, "is that I get to hand pick the guys I work with. So why wouldn't I choose the best? Neil Gaiman is both one of the best and critically acclaimed as well..."

Look for *Spawn #9* with guest writer Neil Gaiman. It's going to be a ride!

Gordon and Ordway Join The Image Universe

Al Gordon (*Timber Wolf*) and **Jerry Ordway** (*Superman*) enter Image with *Wildstar: "Sky Zero"*, a four-issue miniseries. The future Earth was divided by two warring alien factions, both fighting for control of one of Earth's exceptionally rare resources. Their soldier's unique weapons are Parasitic Symbiotes that endow the wearer with incredible powers...at a price. One such weapon is the "Wildstar", and he's traveled back in time to stop a war that starts tomorrow. And tomorrow will be a little late this week...if we're lucky. Gordon said, "It's a very bizarre science-fiction type war, but also very Vietnam-esque...the book is so much bigger than when I started and that's because of Jerry." His enthusiasm is sure to show in the finished book. "*Wildstar* is a book that I think is a real super-hero type of concept that if I were an adolescent, I'd go nuts over it! It's an exciting time in comics right now...the fans are the ones really benefitting from the changes."

NOTE: Of interest to fans, *Arena Magazine* will have an in-depth interview with Al Gordon and Jerry Ordway as well as an Image trading card featuring Wildstar in *Arena #8*, plus a few surprises we can't even talk about yet! Don't miss it, or you'll be sorry!!

Kitchen Sink Press News

Motherless Child...Superb, Poignant Comic Book

Thom Scott, a new artist to comics, marks his debut with a 25-page magazine-size comic book, *Motherless Child*, coming in December. *Motherless Child* tells the true story of Kenny, a man who has no feeling for what his life is about, and finds what shelter he can in his family. An ex-marine, a sentimentalist, a cynic, Kenny is subject to fits of both laughter and rage. As his mother and father age, Kenny faces a crisis of living...

Thom Scott has worked as an illustrator, but his primary focus is the theater. He has acted in over 80 plays and has also staged a number of works. He brings *Motherless Child* a sense of drama - his first book clearly benefits from his experience on the stage. Reading Motherless Child is like paging through a family's scrapbook while being told about the pictures by a born storyteller. The book is a quiet, fascinating examination of a family.

"Thom Scott's art is terrific," says fellow artist Mark Schultz, "a mix of realism and expressionism that blends into a coherent whole. I paged through 'Motherless Child' quickly for the story, which is excellent, then went back and took a good long look at the wonderful art."

Millennium News

Cool Heroes Never Die...

Now, Millennium Publishing, in tandem with the spectacular talents of Brian (*Batman, Green Lantern*) Stelfreeze and Joe (*Miracleman, Timber Wolf*) Phillips and Nick (*Doc Savage: Repel*) Choles is proud to announce the return of *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* to comics!

The new Millennium two-parter will place extremely heavy emphasis on good artwork and strong characterization. *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.: The Birds of Prey Affair* reintroduces the trouble-busting Napoleon Solo, his enigmatic Russian partner, Illya Kuryakin, and the U.N.C.L.E. organization. Geared toward capturing the interest of new fans with its high-tech, fast-paced action, it will still please older fans more familiar with the show with its excellent likenesses and faithful characterizations.

To their amazement, the men from U.N.C.L.E. discover that Thrush, which they thought was destroyed years before, is on the rise again, but now it's even more ruthless and vicious than ever! With a genetically engineered army and a weapon that can interface with every computer system on Earth, Thrush is no longer interested in conquering the world. They've already done it! It's explosive, high-tech action from cover to cover.

The Man From U.N.C.L.E. television series was a cultural phenomena. *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.: The Birds of Prey Affair* will be a comics event! Written by Mark (Doc Savage) Ellis with art by Brian Stelfreeze, Joe Phillips, and Nick Choles. Ships in December.

Malcolm X Controversy Will Only Get Hotter

Malcolm X will be the first of Millennium's biographies of American figures, the imprint, called American Bios, will feature controversial figures from the American past.

His father was murdered by racists...his home was burned by the Klan...hustling the streets, Malcolm Little was sought by gamblers, drug addicts and the police. In jail, Malcolm had a searing vision, and he became *Malcolm X*, a man whose message electrified the world! One of the greatest black leaders and most controversial figures of all time is brought to vivid, full-color life. The story of his extraordinary life and mysterious death is presented in a deluxe format edition timed to ship immediately after the debut of Spike Lee's film and just in time for the Christmas shopping season.

Story and art by newcomer Don Hillsman.

Marvel News

Oh, What A Tangled Web We Weave...

If you love good art, action and a story that pulls you right into the book, then this December you've got a reason to be excited. What is it? Well, how about the *Punisher/ Black Widow: Spinning Doomsday's Web* graphic novel? The Avenger's own Black Widow flies into a furious frenzy when she sets out to stop a maniacal scientist, who plans to unleash a bomb more terrible than anyone's darkest nightmares. And when the Punisher drops in to track down this wigged-out egghead for his own reasons, he and the Black Widow form a most unholy alliance. Both Punisher and Avengers fans will want this graphic novel jam-packed with adrenaline charged action so intense, it leaps right off the page. The plot also takes an intriguing turn when Nick Fury shows up to lend a helping hand.

Make no mistake: This issue is going to scorch! The Punisher alone guarantees that his fans will storm your store, and Nick Fury's appearance will lure espionage enthusiasts, especially S.H.I.E.L.D. readers. Avengers fans are going to love it, too.

On top of that, the artwork is stunningly rendered by Larry Stroman and penned by D.G. Chichester. Ships in December.

The Shadow Riders Are Headed Your Way

Var-ooom! The British are coming: At lightning speed and on the biggest hogs this side of a Harley rally! Hot on the smoking heels of Marvel UK's *Death's Head II* and *Battletide* miniseries come the *Shadow Riders* in their own four-issue limited series! In *Shadow Riders #1*, these bad boys will clash with Mephisto and the ruthless MyS-TECH Board in a way that will have your customers reeling!

Assembled by the Techno-Wizard, Vorin, the Shadow Riders - Boot, Stranger, Roadie and Grunt were brought back from the dead and granted special powers by the Dark Angel. Their goal: use their new powers to destroy MyS-TECH. Of course, Cable and the Ghost Rider, harbor their own resentment of Mephisto and his lackeys, so you can count on them blowing in to lend a little muscle.

Shadow Riders #1 is pencilled by Charlie Adlard, whose glorious art in the UK is sure to carry over here. The book is written by John Freeman and Brian Williamson, who we expect will be comicdom's answer to the Lennon/McCartney song writing team of the British Invasion!

Get in on the action and make sure you have plenty of *Shadow Riders #1* to prepare for the onslaught of customers frothing at the mouth to get in on Marvel UK's British Invasion!

It's Not Easy Being Green

Two months ago, everyone's favorite Jade Giant made big news and a lot of money with his gala 400th issue. To help keep sales momentum going, Marvel will be releasing the first issue of *Hulk: Future Imperfect*, a two-issue limited bookshelf series.

Peter David and George Perez bring the Hulk into an alternate future, where he's the only one who can save the people of that time from an unbelievable villain, Sounds simple so far, but it turns out that this bad guy, known as the Maestro, is really the Hulk's future self! There's no way you'll want to pass this up.

Both issues will feature beautifully embossed covers. Ships in December.

The Guilty Must Be Punished

You've been waiting for it. Frank Castle is gone in 2099 and, unfortunately, forgotten. That is until Jake Gallows discover's Frank's diary and begins to entertain some vigilante plans of his own. See, Jake and Frank have a couple of things in common, namely that Jake's parents were murdered in much the same way Frank's family was gunned down. Corruption has surged to new heights in 2099 society, and killers are not punished. This doesn't sit too well with Jake and he figures it's time to take matters into his own hands. And, he has his predecessor's War Journal to guide him.

This premiere issue is beautifully foil-stamped and written by Pat Mills and Tony Skinner; Mills is best known for his work on Marshal Law. The lush drawings are by longtime Marvel artists Tom Morgan and Jimmy Palmiotti. Ships in December.

Strange Tidings Of Christmas

All that Dr. Strange wants for Christmas this year is the return of his powers, and he's sure going to need them when he confronts his arch rival ~ Dormammu! Kicking a man when he's down is irresistable to the villain from the Dark Dimension, and his kick is three times more powerful than usual in *Dr. Strange #50*.

Ghost Rider wheels in to give Strange a hand, and the Silver Surfer, Namor, and the Hulk show up to lend some muscle. Issue #50 is an action-packed extravaganza that will appeal mightily to several different sectors of the comic book audience. For readers who missed out on Dr. Strange #1 - #49, #50 will be an excellent jumping-on point. Len Kaminski (*Morbius*) and Geoff Isherwood are pulling out all the stops! Dr. Strange #50 comes double-sized and features a spell-binding holografx cover like Hulk #400! This issue will also feature an all-new Secret Defenders lineup. And look for the new *Secret Defenders* series!

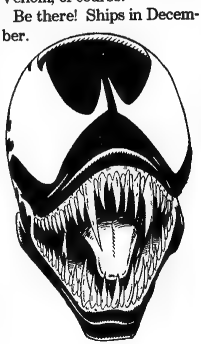
No Poison Is Deadlier Than Venom!

Venom takes up residence in San Francisco, and it's time to stop telling tourists, "Be sure to wear flowers in your hair." Venom is back in his own six issue series!

In *Venom #1*, Spidey sets out to find the slime-slinger, only to discover that Venom has lost interest in settling their score and desires a life of darkness free of the Web-Head's interference. So Eddie Brock and the Alien Costume take off for the West Coast to wreak havoc on a whole new cast of characters.

The art in this brand new series is done by none other than Mark Bagley (*Amazing Spider-Man*) and written by renowned *Amazing* scribe and Venom creator, David Micheline. This limited series is a fitting climax to Spidey's 30th Anniversary celebration. When Venom pays a visit to Spider-Man, books seem to disappear like snowmen around a campfire. You already know that Peter Parker's parents are still alive. Guess who sets out to give them a special welcome back? Venom, of course!

Be there! Ships in December.



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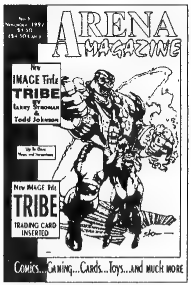

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Mirage News

Convention Insider

Mirage Publishing recently finished up a busy season of convention-going, having returned from some very successful shows - the San Diego Comic Book Expo & Comic-Con, and their very own TurtleCon in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Everyone at the Comic Book Expo who attended the Sneak Peek Social Event enjoyed hors d'oeuvres and jazz music, complements of Mirage Publishing.

Retailers and fans alike were eager to get their hands on *TMNT #50* at the San Diego shows, and supply rapidly disappeared into their waiting hands. The big news came at a panel of Mirage creators entitled "Mirage Publishing: A Look to the Future," when it was revealed that Mirage will be releasing several new titles, in addition to the regular TMNT series for 1993. "We don't want to give away too much right now, but you can expect to see work from just about everyone up here (on the panel), plus other artists like Stan Sakai and Rick Veitch, to name a few, " said Editorial Director Michael Dooney. Joining him on the panel were Kevin Eastman, Jim Lawson, A.C. Farley, Dan Berger and Keith Aiken. "The characters in these different titles will interact with each other in a 'universe' so we'll see some interesting things going on," he continued.

Since then, it's been released that one of the new titles is called *Xeno-Tech* by Michael Dooney. Readers' first glimpse at this new Mirage superhero title can be found in *Plastron Cafe #2* which ships in January.

Parody Press News

Get Ready For The Pummeler

Created by Mike Baron! Meet Phrank Hassle - he's a one-man laugh riot! Ever since mobsters gunned down his wife and two Yorkshire Terriers in the park, he's wanted nothing but revenge on anything that gets in his way - even Girl Scouts! Once you've read *The Pummeler*, you'll have a trigger-happy day! Featuring the debut of hot new artists Sam Agro and Dave (Ren & Stimpy) Feiss! Radical new silver-embossed, full-color covers by fan-favorites Sam Kieth and Ty Templeton! Satire at its best! Ships in December.

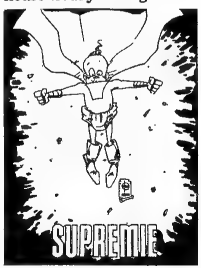
Spittin' Image Update (yep.)

Three titles bounce at you in December. Let's see, we've got *Cyberfarce #1* by Don Chin and Bill Maus, *Supremie #1* by Don Chin and Rus Sever and *Petworks Vs. WildK.A.T.S. #1* by Don Chin and art by Ishida & Agro.

In *Cyberfarce*, powerful robotic cyborgs merge with America's funniest TV comedians. The cast of Saturday Night Livid has been transformed to stamp out bad TV programs, which is going to be a lot of hard work!

In *Supremie*, he's one of the Earth's greatest heroes...but he's just two years old! Returning from home from an intergalactic day-care, the "Babe of Steel" gets in an all-out battle with the senile superheroes from Oldblood! Who will have the impossible task of changing Supremie's diaper? Find out!

In *Petworks Vs. WildK.A.T.S.*, they're the deadliest domesticated animal strike force and boy, are the jobs they do really messy!! Watch Great Dane lead his ever obedient team against those ferocious funnyguys, WildK.A.T.S.! *Petworks #1* can be rolled up and used to house-train your dog!



Sky Comics News

Sky Has The Biggest Month Ever

December is a big month for Sky Comics as they have 11 individual comic releases! That's right, ELEVEN. Included in this is the ever-notable special *Finale 92 Series* in which all current storylines that began in *Sky Comics Presents* are reprinted with the endings in all respective titles. "This is some of the best alternate, black and white stuff I have ever seen," says Hugh Haynes (*Punisher*).

Finale 92 Series Titles

Drifters Annual #1 (Joe Martin and Bob Hickey) - The members of the "time-police force" go in search of a missing teammate who turns out to be a traitor - or is he? Witness as they venture into the near future on a skyship and do battle with the mysterious TekKnight and the Wardogs. *This issue is also offered polybagged with a trading card.*

Seeker: Vengeance #1 (Joe Martin, Willie Peppers and Allen Freeman) - Sky's most popular character! Watch as Tracy LeMaster is inhabited by a powerful spirit that imbues her with unearthly powers. Witness as she utilizes these powers to pay a well-earned debt of bloody retribution! Action-packed and hard-edged deeds that you won't want to miss!

Vapor Loch Annual #1 (David Mack) - A scholar in the 1890's achieves immortality through vampiric means. However, it may be more than he's bargained for when he must face the fury of Simeon Tepes, son of the original Count Dracula! A powerful climax filled with battle and blood-lust!

Blood Pack Annual #1 (Dwayne Haddix, Dan Preece and Chris Leidenfrost) - Join the motley assortment of hard-hitting specialists as they face their arch-nemesis team, the Iron Guard in the far-flung future. It's an issue long action arena and not everybody lives to see it through - and that includes the goodguys! *This issue is also offered polybagged with a trading card.*

More Stuff From Sky

Also from Sky Comics, look for the *Morgana X Special #1* by Quinton Hoover and Allen Freeman. This special features three short adventures introducing the futuristic female bounty hunter known as Morgana X. She's not to be messed with and if you're on her list, may as well shoot yourself because there's no use hiding.

And look for the *Seeker Pre-Portfolio I* featuring work by Willie (*Southern Knights*) Peppers, Allen (*Now Comics*) Freeman, Don (*Malcolm X*) Hillsman, Dan Preece, Andy (*Dark Horse Comics*) Dimitt, Bob Hickey and Secker's writer/creator Joe Martin. This portfolio, which is comic-sized, is scorching! Ask for it!

And last comes the *Tempered Steele Mini-Portfolio I*, which

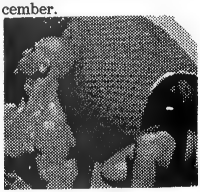
debuts Sky's newest character who will be getting his own title in early 93! Work by Don (*Malcolm X*) Hillsman, Bob McLeod (*Superman*), Andy (*Group LaRue*) Kuhn, Gary (*Hulk*) Barker, Rick (*TMNT*) McCollum, Bob Hickey and Joe Martin. This character looks to be the hottest hero from Sky Comics yet...literally!

All items ship in December.

Tundra News

We Got Den Now

An all-new, ongoing, full-color magazine series from master comics artist Richard Corben. *DenSaga #1* is the first Fantagor/Tundra release featuring Corben's most famous character, Den, and a beautiful back-up adaptation of Clark Ashton Smith's *A Seed from the Sepulcher*. In the first chapter of the all-new action-packed *DenSaga* series, Den searches for his origins and the meaning of his existence. Den gets into big trouble when he finds the Indian visionary who holds the key to his past. Ships in December.



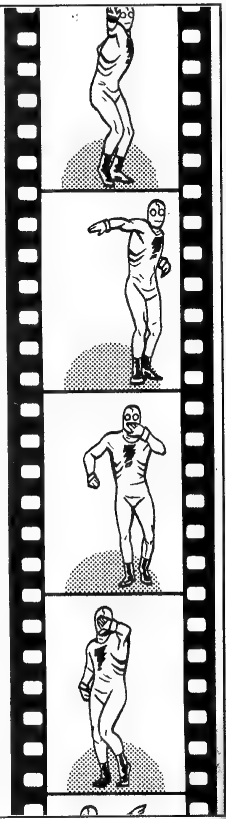
Santa Claus By Ploog

A true work of genius! If there has ever existed a perfect Christmas gift, this is it! A book for young and old alike. Exquisitely illustrated and faithfully adapted, this 88-page, deluxe, signed hardcover graphic novel entitled *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus* is a magical journey through the life of Kris Kringle, from his birth to present. This special edition is limited to 5,000 copies. Also available is an extra special limited edition of 500 copies which incudes a signed and numbered certificate of authenticity illustrated and designed by Michael Ploog himself! Ships...you know when it ships.

What A Madman!

The greatest adventure series in comics is about to begin, and this time it's in full-color! "It's my favorite book. I love it. It's so rare that I see a comic I can really enjoy, and then Madman came along. It's amazingly well-drawn, it's got a great story...I can't wait for the new series to start!" says Madman enthusiast, Mike Mignola.

In *Madman Adventures #1*, Madman meets his girlfriend's father and they go on a date. He gets a whole bunch of new costumes, but then he gets involved with Dr. Flem's time machine...Some secrets are revealed as new mysteries develop, and the only thing else I'm gonna tell ya is that this is one hell of a cliff hanger! Oops, guess you'll have to pick up #2 also, sorry!



Warp Graphics News

A Wolfrider's Reflections

Warp Graphics, in its first non-print publishing venture, will re-release *A Wolfrider's Reflections*, a collection of folk-type songs inspired by the Elfquest stories by Wendy and Richard Pini, also published by Warp. The original appearance of the music, on cassette, was in 1984; the album quickly went out of print and has been unavailable since then. The new release, according to publisher Richard Pini, contains all twenty-two of the songs on the original cassette, but has been remastered to take advantage of the latest in digital technology, and will be available both on tape cassette and compact disc.

"We are very happy to be able to make this music available again," said Pini. "Years after the tape came out, we're still getting letters from Elfquest readers who want to know where they can find a copy. Because the original publisher got into a legal bind way back when, and because the Elfquest tape was peripherally involved, the album never saw a second pressing. It was a real shame, because these are some of the best *filk* songs I've ever heard, and they do Elfquest proud. *Filk* music is akin to folk music, but is generally inspired by works of science fiction, fantasy, or comics.

The selections on the album range far and wide, from soulful ("Tam's Songs") to eerie ("Night crawler") to silly ("Catatonia County Rag") to downright manic ("The Remembering"). Words, music and performances are by well known names in fantasy and science fiction, among them Mercedes Lackey, Leslie Fish, Julia Ecklar and Cynthia McQuillan.

A Wolfrider's Reflections will be released to the direct market in November, 1992 in tape cassette, which will retail for $9.95, and on compact disc, which will retail for $14.95.

Elfquest Hardcover Edition

Warp Graphics announces publication, just in time for the end-of-year holidays, of the latest volume in its series of Elfquest Graphic Novels. The collection is entitled *Elfquest - Hidden Years* and will contain the material originally presented in the first five issues of the Warp Graphics comic book series of the same name. Also, for the first time ever, the Elfquest graphic collection is being released in hardcover.

Elfquest - Hidden Years departs in several ways from the traditional package that Warp Graphics, under its Father Tree Press imprint, has offered over the years. Although it is the ninth volume to be released, it will not be called "Elfquest Graphic Novel #9" to follow the previous series numbering. Publisher Richard Pini explained, "Strictly speaking, the Hidden Years stories don't follow the straight time-line of the previous eight volumes, so we decided to let Hidden Years have its own series of books - and there will be a series!"

Another difference is in the package of the new collection itself. Previous volumes have all been published in softcover, but Hidden Years will be released first as a hardcover book, and then some months later as a softcover. The hardcover edition will contain material not in the softcover, though Pini stated that Warp Graphics has no plans to release a limited edition of the hardcover. "As always, I am looking out for the Elfquest reader who wants a more durable book, rather than the collector who wants to speculate," Pini said.

The readers are out there. Previous graphic novels have sold over a million copies. "These are not copies in print," Pini pointed out, "but copies that have been bought and paid for, by individuals through mail order, by direct sales shops all over the world, and by mainstream bookstores serviced by independent distributors. We anticipate the addition of hardcovers to our line will enhance that number handily." The new edition of *Hidden Years* is priced at $19.95 and will feature heavy, full color laminated board covers.

The publication of the new hardcover edition graphic collection is the crowning touch to 1992, a year of growth and change, both for Elfquest and for Warp Graphics. The year has seen the switch from black-and-white to color for the Elfquest comics, the introduction of a second Elfquest series of comics *(New Blood)*, and the expansion of Warp Graphics itself as a publishing company.

"This is the perfect way not only to close out this year," Pini said, "but to ring in 1993, which is Elfquest's fifteenth anniversary." The first appearance of Elfquest was in issue #1 of *Fantasy Quarterly*, which hit comics shops in February 1978. Warp Graphics plans a number of activities to celebrate the anniversary and promote what Warp is calling its *Elfquest Universe*. Already planned are at least two different promotional posters, the introduction of new Elfquest series titles, and a signing tour that will span several months.

Spotlight On...

THUMBSCREW

A Horror Anthology from Caliber Press

Thumbscrew is a horror anthology that presents top cutting-edge and innovative works. The creative teams are both new and established talents who have taken this opportunity to spread the wings of their imagination, and explore a completely different side of the black and white comic horror story.

Collected in *Thumbscrew #2* is a tale of ancient horror from the myths of American Indians in TOTEM by C. Yates; FEAST OF ASHES by Joe Zabel, a moving and powerful story of child abuse and its effects across generations; the saga of a geriatric female serial killer, BATHSHEBA: BODY GRAPHITTI APOCALYPSE by Andy Garcia; the tale of a vampire's life and death choice, TWISTED BLOOD by J. Moore and R. Zimmerman; the story of a young girl who loses her gift when she tries to converse with shadows in THE OTHERS; and Part 2 of I'LL WAIT FOR YOU, an illustrated prose story about a hitman pursued by his worst nightmare, by Del Stone Jr. with art by Lurene Haines.

Thumbscrew #3 features a beautiful, full painted cover by Lurene Haines for the stunning conclusion of Del Stone Jr.'s illustrated prose story, I'LL WAIT FOR YOU, with artwork by Lurene Haines. You'll also meet a young man who commits murder... all in a day's work, in Joe Zabel's WARM BODIES. Other stories include DEADMAN'S DREAM, about the premature death and life of a deadman; an objective and questioning look at the controversial subject of abortion, WHEELBARROWS; and the tale of madness consuming

A tale of ancient horror from the myths of American Indians in TOTEM by C. Yates.

FEAST OF ASHES
by Joe Zabel
A moving and powerful story of child abuse and its effects from one generation to the next.

TWISTED BLOOD
by J. Moore & R. Zimmerman
A tale of a vampire and a choice of life & death he must make.

Part 2 of the illustrated prose story I'LL WAIT FOR YOU, by Del Stone Jr. with artwork by Lurene Haines, weaves an eerie tale of an unemotional hitman who finds himself dying over and over again.

BATHSHEBA: Body Graffiti Apocalypse
by Andy Garcia
The saga of a geriatric female serial killer.

In **THE OTHERS** a young girl loses her gift when she attempts to converse with the shadows.

A page from Todd Johnson and Larry Stroman's TRIBE.

Image Comics "*Tribe*"

by Larry Stroman and Todd Johnson

A First Glance

Three-way calling is a good thing when you're in Kentucky and the people you interview are in New York and Michigan, respectively, and you just can't swing what it takes to get the three of you together. That's right. Three-way calling sure is a good thing...

Johnson: Alright, Joe?

Martin: *Yeah.*

Johnson: Larry?

Stroman: Yo.

Martin: *Looks like we got it.*

Stroman: I can barely here you.

Martin: *Yeah, it sounds like you're real far away (the bad thing about three-way long distance, I guess).*

Johnson: These "conference calls" are pretty flimsy, I guess.

Martin: *Did you get a chance to reverse those charges?*

Johnson: Naw, don't worry about it. We're both independently wealthy so, uh...(laughs).

Stroman: (Laughter).

Martin: *Of course. So, how are you guys doing today?*

Johnson: Great.

Stroman: Good.

Martin: *Alright! We'll just start this off with the title of your new project under the Image Comics masthead, it's called* ***Tribe****. Can one of you guys tell us about* ***Tribe****?*

(There is a sudden unexpected pause. Martin laughs uneasily. Johnson chuckles).

Johnson: Well, *Tribe* is about superheroes that beat supervillains, y'know, and hopefully sell a lot of books (laughs). Basically, the story is about a bunch of guys who get together

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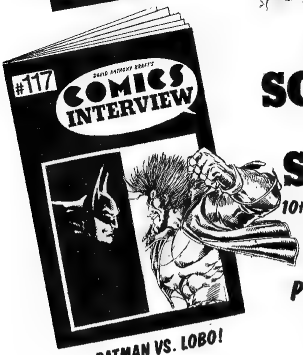

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because they have something in common as far as some things that have happened to them as a result of this treacherous company by the name of Europan. They all band together out of similar circumstances. Each one of them has this different goal of why they want to be with this team. It's not like a basic team like the Teen Titans or the Justice League where they're gonna meet in this meeting room or something. They get together when it benefits one individual. Each has his own agenda and it's not always the same team every time they go out.

Martin: *Sounds good.*

Johnson: You got your lazy superhero, you got your superhero you can't count on, you got your guy that's there for his own reasons...

Martin: *An all-around mixture of characters, I see.*

Johnson: Oh, yeah.

Martin: *Is this a title that you fellas have been wanting to do for a while or did you just now come up with it?*

Stroman: (Laughter).

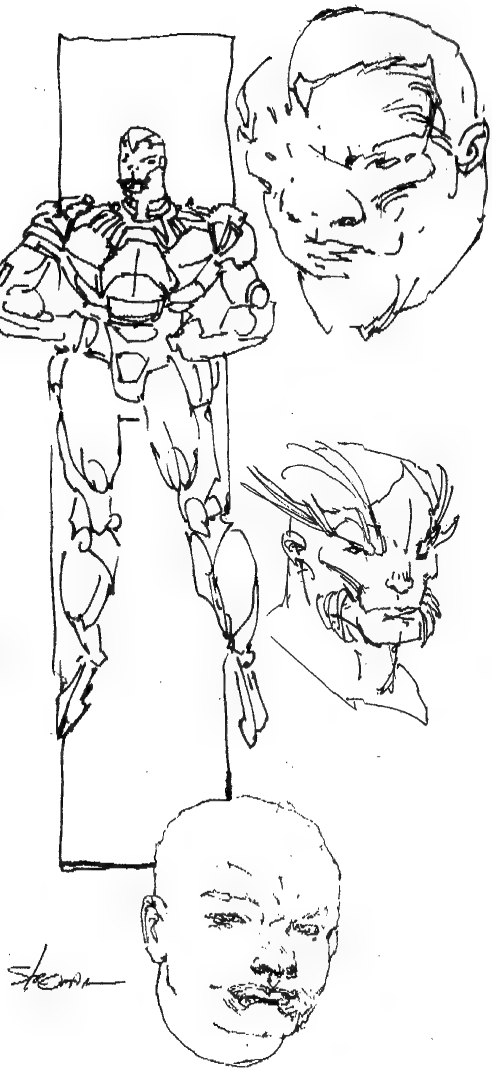
Johnson: Very recent.

Martin: *The opportunity knocked, so you...*

Stroman: Well, it's not just that the "opportunity knocked" because I could've always done a book like this if I wanted to. I felt that this was just the time to do it.

Martin: *Okay. Can one of you guys tell me a bit more about the characters in* ***Tribe****?*

Johnson: The leader of the team is a guy by the name of Murdock Ellison. He's a scientist who has come up with some stealth equipment. He's called Blindspot, a basic "phase -invisibility" type guy and he's the original guy who finds out about this company's plot and he goes about forming the team...other men and women who have been victimized by the same company.



We've got Hannibal. He's gonna be a surprise to the readers. He's the big guy on Arena's cover. He's, uh, just plain Hannibal...the mystery man. He's not real strong, like Guido, he just happens to be large.

Stroman: He appears to be the strong guy but actually the strong guy is going to turn out being another character. That'll be revealed later in the book.

Johnson: Right.

Martin: *So, that'll be a surprise for readers.*

Stroman: Right.

Johnson: We're going to do a lot of visual slants. You've got your typical guy who looks like the leader, you've got your guy who looks like the strong guy and that's not going to be the case.

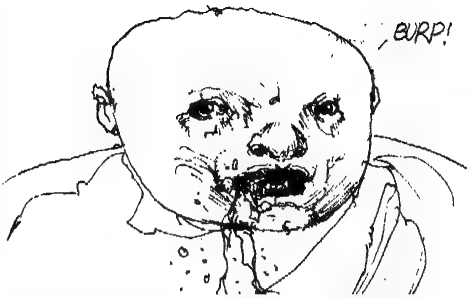
Martin: *A good twist, then. Any female characters?*

Stroman: There's going to be a lot of characters. There's only going to be two right off.

Martin: *So, what, a total of four?*

Johnson: No, actually a total of seven.

Stroman: Seven initial characters.



Johnson: Initial, right. We plan on introducing a whole bunch.

Stroman: About two-hundred altogether.

Martin: *Two-hundred? I Yow, I guess they come and go throughout the book.*

Johnson: As the story goes, yes.

Stroman: The seven ones will be the initial ones but there will be a whole bunch of others.

Johnson: This isn't a team that runs around with outfits that say *Tribe* on them announcing to the police, "Yes, you can go now because Tribe's on the scene!". That's going to be a little different. Tribe just so happens to be the name of the book. But, uh, they're not going to be running around saying, "Yes! I am a founding member of Tribe!".

Martin: *It's just a group.*

Johnson: Yeah. Once a certain person is done with what he joined for he'll probably leave. You might not ever see that character again.

Martin: *Is it like an organization, though?*

Stroman: Sort of like, uh,

gangs that over a period of time become so big that they expand into other cities. They don't really associate with each other but they all use the same name.

Martin: *Is it a mini-series or a planned regular series?*

Stroman: We haven't decided yet. I think we may start it off as a mini-series that may turn into a regular series.

Martin: *Okay. Any cross-overs planned at this time or are you pretty much going to stay in your own realm?*

Stroman: You mean with the other Image titles?

Martin: *Yeah.*

Stroman: Well, we don't have any plans with crossovers but I'm sure it will happen.

Martin: *It'll be interesting to see how the other Image characters will play off of Tribe.*

Johnson: We want to do, in the beginning, some kind of subtle little mystery crossovers. People are going to kind of have to guess and find it themselves, it's not going to be anything blatant where you see the Savage Dragon go running across a panel or anything.

Martin: *Yeah (chuckles softly).*

Johnson: It's something like you'll have to read all the other Image titles and you might catch something that you recognize.

Martin: *Okay. So, you're doing the writing, Todd, and Larry's doing the art. What's the rest of the creative team?*

Stroman: Joe Chiodo is going to be doing the coloring and Michael Heisler, the lettering.

Martin: *You've told us about the group and how it functions, can you give us a basis of the story?*

Johnson: Hmm...such as?

Martin: *Well, a synopsis of the plot or maybe a goal that the group together has in mind or purpose.*

Johnson: It's all individual goals. Everyone has their own agenda.

Martin: *And they all just sort of come into conflict with the badguys throughout the story?*

Johnson: Exactly. Some things just happen to fall into place by circumstance, some things by timing, some things by place. If I happen to be walking down the street with Larry and he happens to get into a fight with some guys that have been looking for him then I have no choice but to help. It's one of those type of things. You're not gonna run away and say, "Hey, you're on your own!" If I'm there I'm gonna help.

Martin: *So, there's a definite brotherhood among the members.*

Johnson: Definitely.

Martin: *Hence the name Tribe, I would take it. What drew you guys to Image? How did it come about?*

Johnson: Larry? (Laughs).

Stroman: Well, how it happened is that I was flown out to this convention in San Diego where the Image guys were and, while I was there, Jim Lee asked me if I would be interested in being part of this new Image thing but at the time I had just started doing *X-Factor*. They had been on their books for quite a while and I had just started so I kind of turned it down at the time but let him know that I would still be interested later.

Martin: *So, while you were on X-Factor you had intentions of joining this Image operation?*

Stroman: Yes.

Martin: *Okay. What's your relationship with Jim (Lee) and any of the other guys at Homage (Studios)?*

Stroman: We all met at conventions and, uh, whenever I can I try to show up at ones where we can get together.

Martin: *Todd, how did you hook up with Larry?*

Johnson: I met Larry at a convention. I host conventions in Detroit and I met him at a convention back when he was on *Alien Legion* and he happened to be one of the guys that I happened to read his book and like his art. I called him up and invited him to a show and, from that point, we just continued to have conversations and I invited him a couple other times once he got on *X-Factor* and we just became friends over the time.

Martin: *Good. A question for Larry...the DC **Darkstars** stuff you did was actually a past project?*

Stroman: I actually did that stuff before I did *X-Factor*.

Martin: *And it's just now popping up. In case readers are interested, which they should be, what was your first professional job?*

Stroman: My first professional job was a back-up stories in some issues of *American Flagg* (by the now defunct First Comics).

Martin: *When do you feel you started gaining attention?*

Stroman: I have no idea. I guess it was somewhere during the time I was on Alien Legion.

Martin: *Do you guys have projects outside of Image and **Tribe** or is this the main focus for you right now?*

Stroman: We both have other projects that we want to do together and projects we want to do individually. But none of that stuff will happen until after *Tribe*.

Martin: *Nothing you would want to give away?*

Stroman: Uh, no, not really.

Martin: *Okay.*

Johnson: We're not doing anything right now except the

Johnson and Stroman's new TRIBE will ship in February from Image Comics.

Tribe stuff.

Stroman: Yeah. We want people to concentrate on that for awhile.

Martin: *So is this the likely candidate for your favorite project so far?*

Stroman: Uh, nope.

Martin: *No? You have another upcoming surprise that's going to be the best one?*

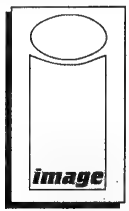
Stroman: Well, we really cannot determine that. The people who buy the books determine that. All that we can do is just base it on whether we're having a good time. Right now, the book we're having a good time doing is Tribe.

Martin: *Well, the more I hear the more interesting it sounds. I look forward to seeing it. Anything to add, Todd?*

Johnson: Tell the readers to buy lots of copies and we'll bring out more.

Well, that wrapped up the interview with Todd and Larry about *Tribe* but we continued to talk for several minutes. Larry asked about the format of the interview and Todd asked how *Arena* was doing. He requested that I mention that our fifth issue is going to be our biggest yet and, not surprisingly, he was absolutely right. Orders on this issue nearly tripled in number! Thanks to Todd, Larry and, above all, we can't kid you or ourselves, Image Comics. Facing facts, Image sells. I'd like to bestow a special and salubrious "Thank You" to Todd Johnson for his help above and beyond the call of duty. I've suggested to our publisher that we should just add this guy to the staff roster because he's done so much for us!

Anyhow, in *Arena Magazine #8*, watch out for another interview similar to this one with Al Gordon and Jerry Ordway about their new Image title, *Wildstar: Sky Zero*. Be here and I'll see ya'.



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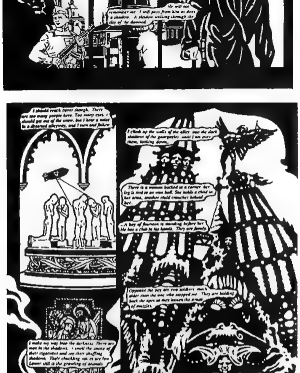
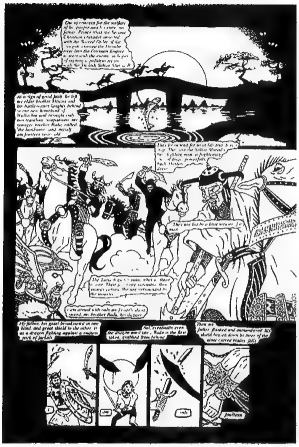
"Diary of a Vampire"

Gary Francis and David Mack - Published by Caliber Press





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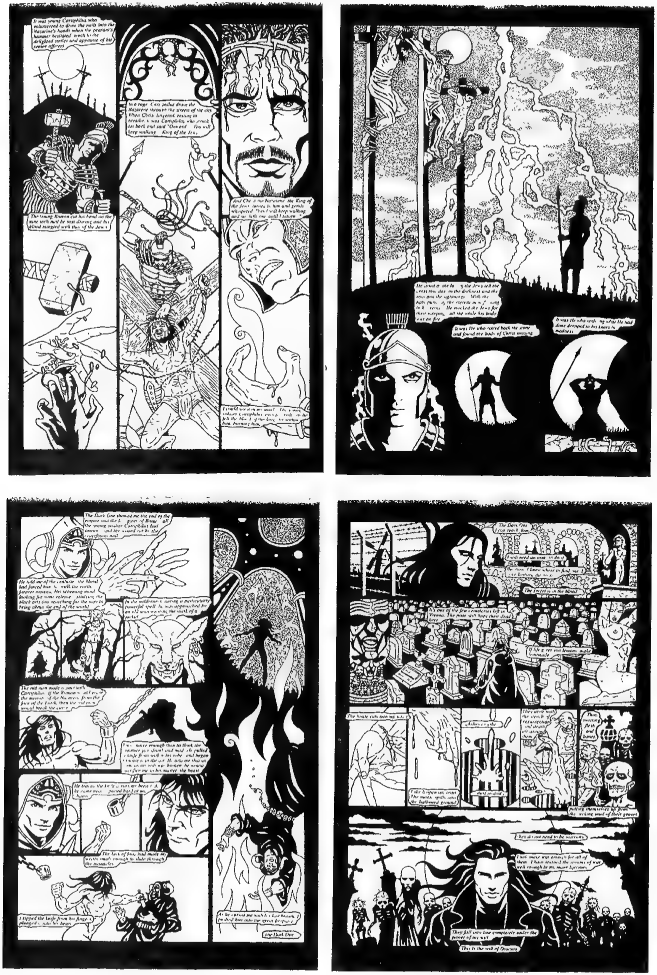

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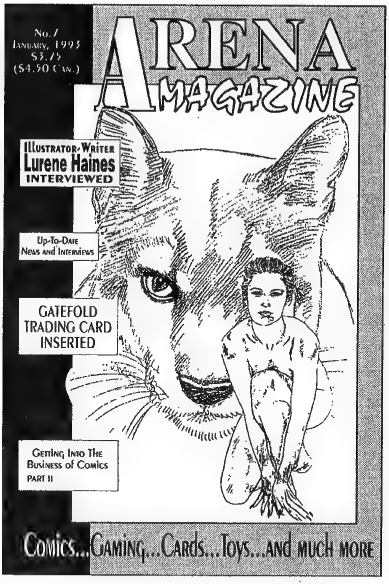

December 1992 SKY COMICS / ARENA MAGAZINE/ BLUE LINE

Drifters Annual #1
Drifters Annual #1
Polybagged Ed. with Trading Card
Seeker: Vengeance #1
Blood Pack Annual #1
Blood Pack Annual #1
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Vapor Loch Annual #1
Morgana-X Special #1
Morgana-X Special #1
Arena Magazine #7 *Polybagged with Trading Card*
Drifters Portfolio #1 offered again
Tempered Steele Portfolio #1
Seeker Portfolio #1
Drifters Portfolio #2
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DRIFTERS

Drifters Annual #1 is by Joe Martin and Bob Hickey The members of the "time-police force", the Drifters, go in search of a missing teammate who turns out to be a traitor-or is he? Witness as they venture into the near future on a skyship and do battle "most heinous" with the mysterious Tek-Knight and the Wardogs. If that isn't enough, right in the middle of one confrontation, they must face the fury of the rebel warrior/leader Ardh the Brutal, who is armed with the powerful Omni-Device.

Drifters Annual #1 polybagged with Trading Card

That's right! Whether you've heard of Sky Comics or not, and chances are you probably haven't, you have to take advantage of its biggest month ever! For the first time, the release list includes more than 10 items for December. Count 'em, Ten! From flying and fighting the spaceways in *Morgana X* and *Blood Pack*, riding the waves of time with the *Drifters*, battling the criminal element with the *Seeker*, or fleeing hordes of malicious vampires in *Vapor Loch*, you're in for tons of action-packed adventure!

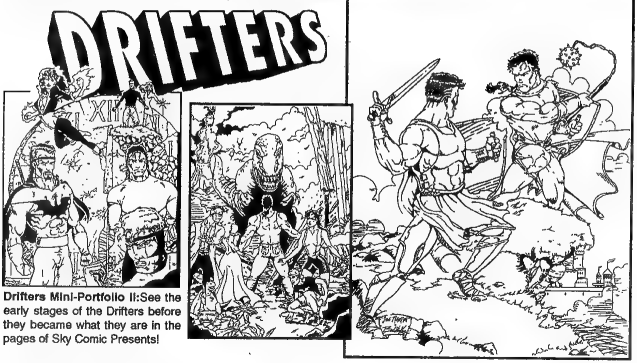
The *Finale '92 Series* is what they're calling it. Why? It wraps up the year, our first year of comics publishing, and all the ongoing storylines in our current anthology title, *Sky Comics Presents.*

Two of the Finale '92 Series are extra special! The *Drifters Annual* and *Blood Pack Annual* will be poly-bagged with trading cards inserted.

The ball's rolling and the future looks bright for Sky Comics. It's a good suggestion for retailers to at least sample their products. Excellent quality!! Check it out.

All issues will include an individual certificate and when all four certificates are mailed in, the reader will receive an exclusive special demo *Seeker Gatefold Trading Card.* This is a one time offer and you must have a copy of all four certificates.

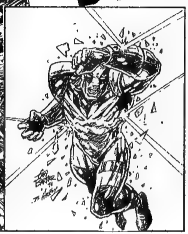
All New mini-portfolio including original covers and artwork by Joe Martin and Bob Hickey from the Yet unpublished Mini-series!



Drifters Mini-Portfolio II: See the early stages of the Drifters before they became what they are in the pages of Sky Comic Presents!

Offered Again

DRIFTERS



The original comic-sized mini-portfolio produced by Sky Comics, makes it return featuring the Drifters Sky's very own time-jumping super-heroes, as rendered by such artist as Hugh Haynes (*Punisher*), Mike Parobeck and Paul Fricke (*Fly*), Gary Barker (*Hulk*), Rick McCollum (*TMNT*), David Mack (Caliber) and others.
Really nice package!

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BLOOD PACK

Blood Pack Annual #1 by Dwayne Haddix, Dan Preece and Chris Leidenfrost. Join the motley assortment of hard-hitting specialists known as the *Blood Pack* as they face their arch-nemesis team, the Iron Guard in the far-flung future! It's an issue-long action arena and not everybody lives to see it through, and that includes the goodguys! This one is not to be missed! Also, a conflict within the team is somewhat resolved with the introduction of a new team member.

Blood Pack Annual #1 polybagged with Trading Card.

The Seeker: Vengeance #1 is by Joe Martin, Willie Peppers (*Southern Knights*) and Allen Freeman and it's Sky's most popular character in a tale of retribution that is not to be missed.

Vapor Loch Annual #1 by David Mack stars a scholar in the 1890's who achieves immortality through vampiric means.

Morgana X Special #1 by Quinton Hoover and Allen Freeman and features three short adventures introducing the futuristic female bounty hunter known as Morgana X.

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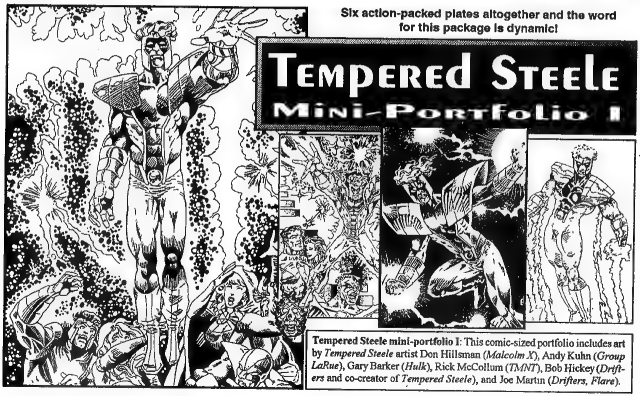
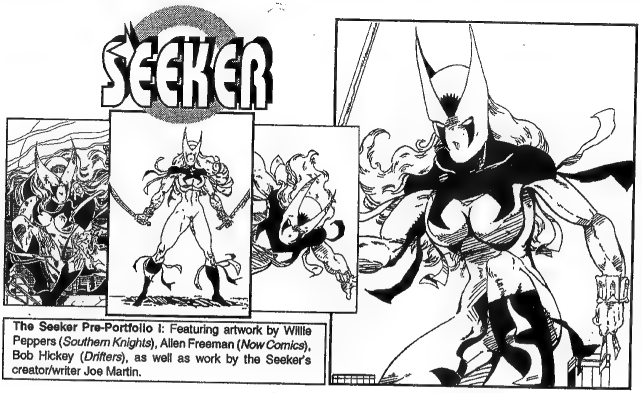


Tempered Steele mini-portfolio I: This comic-sized portfolio includes art by *Tempered Steele* artist Don Hillsman (*Malcolm X*), Andy Kuhn (*Group LaRue*), Gary Barker (*Hulk*), Rick McCollum (*TMNT*), Bob Hickey (*Drifters* and co-creator of *Tempered Steele*), and Joe Martin (*Drifters, Flare*).



The Seeker Pre-Portfolio I: Featuring artwork by Willie Peppers (*Southern Knights*), Allen Freeman (*Now Comics*), Bob Hickey (*Drifters*), as well as work by the Seeker's creator/writer Joe Martin.

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Spotlight On...

Heroic Publishing

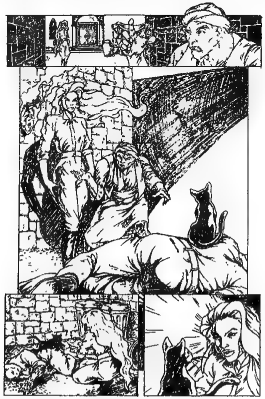
New artist Jim Hall

Heroic's hot new artist, Jim Hall, is stepping in to help out regular artist Paul Abrams on penciling chores for the savage, sensuous Tigress. Jim will be handling back-up features for the *Tigress* comic book, as well as penciling the Tigress/She-Bat crossover scheduled for February's second issue of *Murcielaga She-Bat.*

Jim's detailed art style is perfect for the series of backup stories that begins in *Tigress #5.* That series continues the origins of the legendary Vanguard of Freedom, telling the story of how the Tigress went to war with the evil Dark Malice in Cairo in 1932.

This series featuring the Tigress vs. Malice follows directly on the heels of stories that appear in the first three issues of Lady Arcane. If you're a Tigress fan who wants to be ready fro Jim Hall's rendition of the Tigress of six decades past, you might want to take a look at those issue of Lady Arcane.

The following pencils are from *Tigress #5* and *Murcielaga She-Bat #2.*



COMICS NOW

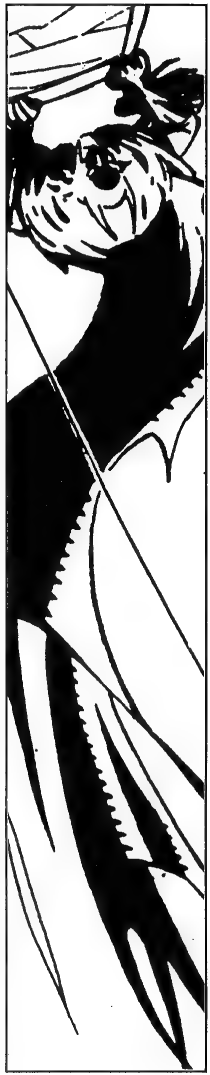
by **Jerry Smith**

For some reason I think that Innovation Comics' books are the most overlooked in fandom. They publish some of the highest quality comics on the market, yet I never hear anything about the company in fanzines or anywhere else. It is hard to tell how the company is doing, but I hope they have a long, healthy publishing history ahead of them. Fully painted art, intelligent stories, and slick printing packages are what fans have come to expect from Innovation, and the company never disappoints. They have a bit of trouble maintaining their shipping schedule, which they readily admit, but personally it has never mattered to me when a book hits the market, so long as it's good. The lapse between issues of Innovation's hit *Dark Shadows* comic are a bit disappointing, but the comic is so good it's worth the wait. Innovation's overlooked hit this month is *Lost In Space*. Yes, that *Lost In Space*. The campy, so-bad-it's-good science fiction joke from the sixties is back as an Innovation comic book, only now the concept of a pioneering family of space explorers being hopefully lost isn't treated as a joke. Editors David Campiti and George Broderick Jr. have done the seemingly impossible and made *Lost In Space* the fun, involving sci-fi adventure it always should have been. What's more, Campiti has gone far out enough to get Bill Mumy, Will Robinson of the original TV show, to serve as consultant on the series. Mumy, now an excellent musician and

writer in his own right, has recently agreed to write the entire second year of *Lost In Space*. *Lost In Space* the comic is what *Lost in Space* the television show should have been. It takes place about five years after the last episode of the original series, and the younger members of the Robinson clan, Will, Penny, and Judy, have grown up quite a bit. Penny has passed puberty and Will is going through that hell as the series progresses. Judy is the singer/actress who gave up her career by going on a doomed space mission with her parents. Maureen and John Robinson are the caring, deeply religious parents who feel guilty and responsible for ripping any chance of a normal childhood away from their children. Don West is still the no-nonsense adventurer Mark Goddard made him in the TV series. Dr. Smith is the most different character from his TV incarnation and the change is welcome. In the first black and white episodes of the 1960's *Lost In Space*, Dr. Zachary Smith was depicted as an evil opportunist who sabotaged the Jupiter II for his mysterious employers. Later episodes dropped the evil persona to make him comedy relief. *Lost In Space* the comic returns Dr. Smith to his original, evil personality. The comic does a much better job than the television show ever did of looking into the obvious ramifications of seven people being hopelessly lost on the final frontier. The lonliness, the frustrations, and the missed opportunities all surface in different characters at different times. Take *Lost In Space* #10, containing two stories, "Afterthoughts" and "Gone Fission". "Afterthoughts" is a thoughful story about the loneliness felt by Penny after she loves and loses for the first time (in LIS #8). She decides she'll survive, but only after some introspection about her situation and some pleasing interaction with the rest of the cast. "Gone Fission" deals with Will and his feelings of alienation brought on by puberty. In a priceless script by Bill Mumy, the depressed Will and his father go on a "fishing" trip for needed minerals to a nearby planet. The resulting characterization and dialog could only come from a writer imtimately connected to these characters. And if not little Billy Mumy, then who? Innovation has taken these characters and concepts and made them much better than they ever were on television. This a great comic

to read if you have fond memories of the original show, but always wished it was better. Now it is.

I hope someone out there besides me is old enough to remember Mike Nasser, the artist of characters such as the *Legion of Super-Heroes, Batman, Green Arrow*, and a host of others back in the late 70's/early 80's. Mike came out of nowhere, dazzled the comic book world with his dynamic Neal Adams-inspired art, then disappeared. Turns out he moved to Israel, changed his name to Mike Netzer, and created Israel's own super-hero, *URI-ON*. Now he's back in the US, making a huge splash once again in the comic world with the release of *Batman & Green Arrow: The Poison Tomorrow*. Written by veteran Denny O'Neil (whoops, it says "Dennis" on the cover--I suppose a $5.95 comic book deserves a bit more dignity than usual), The Poison Tomorrow deals with the villainess Poison Ivy and her attempts to destroy most of the world's children through a plague. To prove how really diabolical she is, she recruits a businessman co-conspirator to help her start the plague through contaminated baby food. Enter Oliver Queen, that intrepid archer from Seattle otherwise known as Green Arrow, and the Batman himself. Ollie's long time lover and partner Dinah Lance has accidently contracted this plague (as opposed to contracting it on purpose), and Ollie tracks the maker to Gotham City in order to retrieve an antidote. Sounds a bit contrived, but it works on paper. O'Neil, who has written comics since they were hand printed on papyrus, proves in Poison Tomorrow that he only gets better with age. His characterization of Batman is right on track, a tired warrior who has seen too much insanity. Poisoning baby food? What's next? O'Neil's stoic Batman is constantly surprised by how much lower we humans can sink as a race. His Oliver Queen is the jovial Ollie we've seen for years, only concern for Dinah has tinged his personality with a frantic desperation to find Ivy and the cure to the plague. The only quibble I have for this otherwise slick package is minor, but a quibble still. Mike Grell, regular writer of Oliver's own solo title, has an unwritten rule about never calling the character "Green Arrow" within the pages of his book, a rule which O'Neil breaks by having Batman address him as such. Grell realizes all too well that grown people running around in spandex fighting street crime is a ridiculous idea, but he adds every realistic touch he can to the Green Arrow comic, and that is one of them. The public knows that Oliver Queen is "Green Arrow", so why call him that goofy "super-hero" name? Otherwise, The Poison Tomorrow is a grand adventure, and one of the few comics worthy of the pricy format. Here's to a sincere "Welcome Back" to Mike Netzer. Mike will soon be taking over as regular artist on one of the Batman titles, and I can't wait to see his artwork again on a regular basis.



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February, 1993
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ARENA #8

UKCAC '92

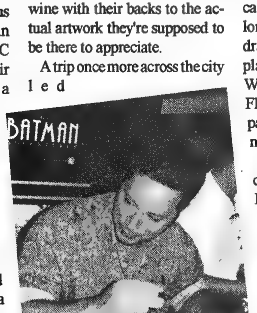
By Paul H. Birch

It was a low turn-out for UKCAC'92, the United Kingdom's Comic Art convention on Saturday 19th September, yet as I sat eating something vaguely resembling breakfast in the hotel across the road, fans queued as early and as expectantly as they had in previous years. For myself, I'd been in London since the Thursday. DC as part of the launch for their Vertigo imprint had invited a number of British journalists and freelancers to take lunch with them out at Covent Garden .

It transpired Art Young is to be based in the UK liaisoning with the predominant number of creators here, such as Jamie Delano whose work Animal Man editor, Tom Peyer enthused over. Marketing lady, Patricia Jeres got to see the ugly face that talked to her over a transatlantic line...and still spoke to me(!), while Bob Wayne and Group Editor, Karen Berger took us through a presentation for the line, answering questions afterwards to most people's satisfaction.

Early evening saw the opening of the Comic Art Trust Museum in Euston. Across two spacious rooms hung assorted cartoons, illos and strips by the likes of Ralph Steadman, Heath Robinson and Cruickshank. They're neither as provocative nor as politically satirical as The Art of Folly & Vice, a show that ran in the City of Birmingham's Museum and Art Gallery two years previous, but hopefully, in time under a knowledgeable curator like former Escape publisher, Paul Gravette it'll make its mark. A crying shame to the event was the suited socialites happy to sip their wine with their backs to the actual artwork they're supposed to be there to appreciate.

A trip once more across the city led me to gatecrash an S.S.I meeting. The Society of Strip Illustrators, are currently undergoing changes in policy, and possibly a name, but their basic stated manifesto remains to promote the medium; and in the case of tonight, try and secure work. Artists filed in line to be critiqued by representatives from Marvel, DC and Tundra. It's a long drawn-out procedure that by the look on the faces of all concerned drained them intensely. I don't think anyone got a job!



Jon Bogdanove

On Friday's Trade Day the number of publishers showing their forthcoming wares were at an all-time low; DC, Marvel, Dark Horse International, and this year's sponsors Tundra UK. Fleetway, that mighty goliath which dominates the British scene, from nursery titles through to the Judge Dredd Megazine were nowhere to be seen. There were a number of rumours being postulated as to why this was, but they basically boiled down to either their new parent company, Gutenburgh was holding onto its cash, or conventions were no longer viable when they could draw huge crowds for signings at places like Virgin Megastores. Whatever the real reasons, Fleetway were still able to throw parties on Friday and Saturday night.

Another rumour was to be confirmed as fact. Titan's Mike Lake and Michael Luckman had traded shares with Nick Landau, leaving the latter sole owner of Titan Books, and the former pair to subsequently sell Titan Distributors to Steve Geppi's Diamond network. This achieved the somewhat unwieldily title,'Titan Distributors - A Diamond International Company'. Lake made a passionate speech, promising customers and employees that the industry would prosper by greater efficiency, and he would remaining on board with total commitment to the new company, which will now prove to be an incredibly dominant force in terms of British/European distribution. Capital City (who have long attended the UKCAC conventions) were represented on stage by John Davis who tried to bring levity to the revelations;

and was determined to offer a viable alternative, hinting at an added presence from Capital within the European market. Both distributors commented that competition was healthy, and thus, ultimately beneficial to customers. Britain waits expectantly for what the following months will ensue.

When the slide show broke down on Tundra's Frank Wynne (the same mishap had happened to Tundra's Steve White at the Alexandra Palace Con earlier in the year), the publicity men were left to do their sales spiel without the use of images. DC's Bob Wayne and Marvel's Lou Bank took to an almost double act, alternatively praising and putting down the others' company. While the object of the game was undoubtedly to push their products, they offered sound business advise to fledgling retailers. The show over, everyone vacated to the bar.

Saturday found convention organiser, Frank Plowright apologizing for the number of confirmed American guests who'd failed to appear, and a promise of returned entrance fees for those felt hard-done by. This must have been the first UKCAC Chris Claremont hadn't attended, fortunately Carl Potts kept up his high batting average. The general understanding was that world recession had hit hard everyone.

As something of a surprise the day opened with Stan Lee who for all his inconsistencies in the telling of similar tales about Marvel over the years, proved 'entertaining'. Artists Alan Davis, Mike Collins and Mark Farmer must have been True Believers, they entered the hall early to get good seats.

Throughout the day, fans could see various members of the S.S.I. writing and drawing a complete comic book from a Neil Gaiman plot. It was printed overnight and sold Sunday. The proceeds were split between the Cartoon Art Trust and the London Cartoon Centre.

Crowds

Dennis Janke

gathered en masse wherever Simon Bisley or Alan Grant walked. David Mazzuchelli signed work constantly whilst promoting *Rubber Blanket*. *Superman* artist, Jon Bogdanvo had contributed a fitting Joe Shuster tribute to the convention booklet. Throughout the weekend one could find the likes of Brian Bolland, Dave Gibbons, Bryan Talbot, David Lloyd, John Ridgway, John Romita Jr, Jamie Delano, Pete Milligan, Steve Pugh, Roger Langridge, and Evan Dorkin (who's becoming an increasingly popular fixture to British conventions) doing signings etc. There were complaints from fans who couldn't always readily find the creators unless called on stage 'to do bit', and while such writers and artists shouldn't be hassled non-stop, a more equivocal arrangement of their time would have been beneficial to the weekend as a whole.

In the afternoon Hunt Emerson gave a witty overview of his cartooning career thus far. He revealed he now intends to adapt *Casanova*, and was somewhat taken aback by accusations of sexism by fellow cartoonist, Julie Hollings.

The Fancy Dress Competition became more ludicrous than ever with entries from *The Legion of Super-Pets* to *Milk & Cheese*, but ultimately it tended towards being overlong for me.

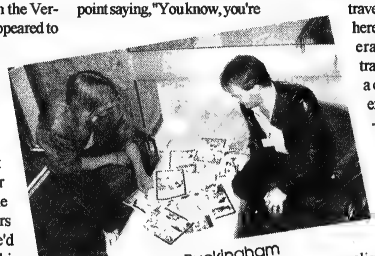
A current complaint for British retailers is the number of part-time dealers attending marts and suchlike, selling off titles at low prices to which they with other overheads can't afford to compete. Indeed the dealers rooms were filled with people barking out loud many bargains you'd find hard to beat. *Miracleman* artist, Mark Buckingham told of near fist-fights between himself and other artists as they sought for original Mike Mignola artwork. It certainly looked like a lot of titles were being purchased, but as for the amount of money taken, who knows. But then again, certain speculative dealers have been making rather too much out of the buying public in recent years to my mind.

Sunday saw many sore heads recovering from late night drinking at the Fleetway party, thus it became painful laughing so much at the Celebrity Quiz hosted by British humour writer/editor Kev F. Sutherland. DC's Paul Kupperberg jokingly ribbed his opposing side, to which *Toxic Crusaders* contributor, David Leach gave just as good back. A slide show interspersed the questions, with the most memorable section being illustrations from Steranko's *Chandler*, to which each contestant attempted to mimic an applicable pulp fiction

monologue. Between the humourous absurdities, only Marvel Editor-in-Chief, Tom DeFalco actually managed to capture the genre's flavour.

A preoccupation with the Vertigo panels' audience appeared to be their concern that DC's British creators were being ghettoised, but ultimately they were in favour of the line.

Speaking to Robert Kanigher he felt his hour on stage hadn't gone down as well as two years before when he'd he'd taken no prisoners via his cantankerous old man act; revealing his own interpretation of little known details from his many years in the American comic book industry. While the audience had been sparser this time round, and he'd indeed recited more poetry than in 1990, plus a chapter from his novel which might have left the younger members of the audience perplexed, I told him I found him as rewarding an experience to behold as before. He looked at me with that Steel-like gaze of his, grasped my hand firmly, and countered his previous viewpoint saying, "You know, you're right". The man's a law unto himself but I'd have him no other way!



Paul Birch and Mark Buckingham

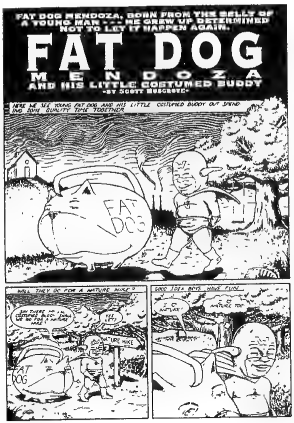
It was a highly subdued convention for which I honestly don't think the organizers can be blamed. They appeared to be doing all they could to make it worthwhile despite those guests who'd not turned up. One of the major problems was undoubtedly the fall of the pound mere days before UKCAC, and the country being in a general economic recession - it simply frightened people off. Unlike American fans who might not think anything of travelling 200 miles, we here in Blighty are generally reluctant to travel, plus London as a city is an extremely expensive place to be - even for a weekend. One of the reasons for the instigation of the Glasgow UKCAC's was to allow a more realistic opportunity for Scottish and northerly based fans to get to conventions, in fact it might well be a positive move to establish future UKCAC's outside London to a more central part of the country.

It had been a long four days, and as I gave voice to such weary feelings artist, John Higgins smiled: "But you know you'll be back here next year". Yes, dammit! It's a hard habit to shrug off.

PREVIEW

FAT DOG MENDOZA

By Scott Musgrove - Published by Dark Horse Comics


FAT DOG MENDOZA, BORN FROM THE BELLY OF A YOUNG MAN - - HE GREW UP DETERMINED NOT TO LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN.
FAT DOG
MENDOZA
AND HIS LITTLE COSTUMED BUDDY
BY SCOTT MUSGROVE
WE'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT TOGETHER
AND NOW WE'RE GOING TO SAVE THE WORLD!
FAT DOG
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
I'M NOT SURE
I'M NOT SURE
I'M NOT SURE

INDUSTRY NEWS

WARP GRAPHICS PROMOTES LITERACY

Warp Graphics, publisher of *Elfquest* and related titles, has joined with the non-profit organization Cartoonists Across America to bring attention to the often faceless literacy issue.

Cartoonists Across America has championed the cause of literacy throughout North America since 1985. Planet Literacy is their latest publication, to "make a strong case for using cartoons and comic books to increase the literacy rate in the United States". Not only will this campaign reach into the schools but Planet Literacy will be also be distributed to corporations with Workplace Literacy Programs.

This volume, sponsored by the Library of Congress, Warp Graphics, and other comic publishers/creators, will contain "articles, interviews, artwork and photographs connecting literacy to a variety of important issues to the youth of today". 20,000 copies are targeted for distribution to teachers and librarians for long-term use as a reference source and for use in the classroom.

Elfquest has long been used in the classroom to stimulate students' interest in reading. Teachers have written to Warp Graphics praising the comic and commenting that: "I have been reading the first Elfquest Graphic Novel to the children at my day care center (ages 5-9) and they love it!"; "*Elfquest* will be part of our 8th grade reading program next year; it generates real enthusiasm, even with the more dedicated nonreaders." One student adds: "Before I was introduced to *Elfquest*, I had absolutely no motivation to read. My teachers thought I had a learning disability and predicted that I would never read. Your books inspired me to read."

With such a history of success, Warp Graphics could not ignore so worthy a project as Planet Literacy. Both illiteracy and aliteracy (referring to those who know how to read, but choose not to for pleasure) are serious problems in the U.S. today. Warp Graphics is proud to help support Cartoonists Across America's efforts to address these issues and promote literacy.

WARP GRAPHICS HIRES MARKETING DIRECTOR

Warp Graphics, Inc. is growing by leaps and bounds. For the first time in fifteen years, there is more than one Elfquest comic book title available to readers and fans, and there are more ideas on the burner; Wendy Pini has a new studio and is interviewing assistants; and Richard Pini now has someone in the office to talk to besides himself and an incessantly-ringing phone.

Catherine Kouns (who prefers the nickname of "Cat"), who assumed the position of Marketing Director on September 4, 1992, comes to Poughkeepsie from Peoria, Illinois by way of Hartford, Connecticut. She holds a Master's degree in Communications from Illinois State University and a Bachelor's degree in Speech Communications & Theatre Arts from Eureka College.

An avid comics reader since childhood and an Elfquest aficionado from the very beginning, Kouns has spent over nine years working with the media in a variety of positions. She has written and produced television and radio commercials, organized trade shows from booth selling and ad campaign planning to program book layout, written press releases and newsletters; and managed the day-to-day chaos of an advertising agency.

Richard Pini, Warp Graphics's publisher, welcomes the two-hundred percent jump in office staff. "This has been a solitary professional existence for the last several years," Pini said. "The good side has been that I could get away with a very casual working environment. The bad side has been that, as a businessperson, my plate's been overflowing, out of control. With the introduction of what we're starting - heaven help us - to call an Elfquest universe, Wendy and I knew the time was overripe for some help. Cat is a godsend to us and Warp Graphics."

While Warp is not about to let the...Cat out of the bag completely with respect to its plans for the remainder of 1992 and beyond, Pini says that Kouns has already been instrumental in furthering plans for new Elfquest titles, and expanding Elfquest's readership beyond the traditional comics audience. He stated, "I hope I'll survive what I'm about to say, but Cat is truly...the "paws" that refreshes."

Aliens Vs. Predator Movie In The Works

Dark Horse Comics - in association with Largo Entertainment - recently broke new ground for an "independent" comic book publisher by producing *Dr. Giggles*, a major theatrical motion picture.

Now, if all goes as planned, Dark Horse's popular *Aliens* and *Predator* comic book series may be treated to a big-budget blockbuster based upon (what else?) their best-selling *Aliens vs. Predator* miniseries.

In a recent Diamond *Previews* interview, Dark Horse president Mike Richardson revealed the tentative plans for the project, which he has often referred to as "the 90's version of *Frankenstein vs. The Wolfman*." Though various production "details" have been reported elsewhere, Richardson would say only that the film is "in discussion."

Of course, given the shifting financial tectonics of big money Hollywood deal-making, anything is possible (including major delays and/or exhilirating surprises). In other words, details as they develop!

Superman? Are You Crazy?

Among all the recent publicity surrounding the imminent demise of Superman, one story had a decidely negative spin. According to a front page article in the Sept. 12th edition of the Boston Globe, members of the Rhode Island and Massachusetts mental health communities are up in arms about Superman's impending death at the hands of Doomsday, "a super lunatic escapee from a comic insane asylum."

The article states that the mentally ill and mental health professionals "are tired of lunatic villains stigmatizing their illness and perpetuating the myth that mental illness breeds violence." It says that the Doomsday storyline will be brought to the attention of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, and that a letter writing campaign is planned, along with a visit by "an information delegation" to Superman editor Mike Carlin's office in New York "whether he wants us or not."

The article quotes Carlin as responding "Frankly, I'm surprised that this is all being taken the wrong way. We're in the comic book business. We specialize in stereotypes."

TITAN DISTRIBUTORS

A Diamond International Company

Diamond Acquires Titan Distributors

In a move to bolster its growing international operations, Diamond Comic Distributors announced an agreement to acquire the UK's largest comics distributor, Titan Distributors, Ltd..

Diamond will merge its Diamond UK operation with Titan's distribution wing, creating a new company: Titan Distributors: A Diamond International Company. Titan's publishing and retailing concerns were not involved in the transaction, and will be separately spun off into individual companies headed by former Titan executives.

Key employees from Titan Distributors and Diamond UK will remain with the new venture, including Mike Lake, former Titan Director; Jesse Deacon, who will retain the role of General Manager; and Diamond UK Manager John Hitchen.

"I've always respected what Mike Lake and the other Titan directors and employees have accomplished," said Diamond President and CEO Steve Geppi. "The new Titan will combine our strengths as distributors, offering retailers in the UK and Europe an unbeatable combination of products, services, and people."

Geppi also stated, "We're very excited about this merger, and I believe UK and European comics retailers will be excited, too. Diamond has always believed that a strong local presence is needed to ensure good quality service for customers and the new Titan provides just that. Backed by Diamond's industry-leading service in the U.S., our new UK operation will offer retailers the best of both worlds."

Marvel's Mad Dog Bites Malibu!

Malibu Comics' Publisher Dave Olbrich requested that the following quote be run in its entirety in Diamond's retail newsletter the *Diamond Dateline*, "Malibu's position accurately...regarding the situation with the *Bob* comic

book license." Dave said: "No matter which publisher gets the license, a comic book based on Bob Newhart's new TV series is going to be a good thing for the industry. This is exactly the kind of mainstream visibilty and acceptability that will only do positive things for the comics business.

"Marvel already had a trademark on the Mad Dog name (for a different character), which gave them an airtight argument for not allowing another publisher to do this license. Paramount was very displeased that Marvel's trademark for the Mad Dog name didn't show up in their pre-planning research. It is clear that Malibu was Paramount's first choice to do this comic book and that license only went to Marvel due to the trademark conflict."

What's In A Name?

For those who may have missed it, when the newest Marvel UK title, *Team Helix*, hits the stands in November, readers will notice a slight difference. The series chronicling the genetically-altered beings desperate battle against their creators' earlier and unsuccessful experiments will now be titled, *Codename: Genetix!*

In other Marvel UK news, the December launch of the *Shadow Riders*, the saga of a group of undead bikers with heavy weaponry (and an attitude to match), will now launch in March or April of 1993. The delay has been attributed to "continuity reasons." Stay alert for a resolicitation!

Words & Pictures Museum

For adults who grew up with comics, but have not read them lately, it's a great place to marvel at comics' sophistication and sheer beauty. For the younger crowd, it's a chance to come face to face with their favorite comic book characters and cartoons strips from the 1970's, 80's and 90's.

That's what you'll experience when you visit the Words and Pictures Museum of Fine Sequential Art found in the classic New England town of Northampton, Massachusetts.

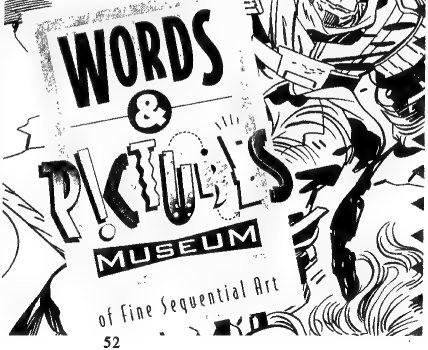
"Words and Pictures will be the first museum devoted entirely to 'contemporary' works of art in the genre of comic illustration, displaying art by the finest illustrators in the field," states Kevin Eastman, co-creator of the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and the driving force behind the foudation of the Words and Pictures Museum.

During a visit to the Words and Pictures Museum, visitors will see the evolutuion of sequential art from ancient times to the present, with special areas where guests may peek into the studios of famous artists, or admire galleries filled with the finest sequential art in the world. Visitors can even step through the frame of a comic to become part of the action themselves.

The museum's galleries will feature many exciting exhibits, consisting of totally original works - no reproductions - on permanent loan from Kevin Eastman's collection. Exhibits will change on a quarterly schedule with upcoming shows featuring the works of such talented artists as Dave McKean, Simon Bisley, and Jack Kirby, as well as retrospectives on *Swamp Thing* and the *TMNT*.

The museum will also sponsor roundtable discussions, guest-artist appearances, book and poster signings, and an educational outreach program to schools, which will hopefully raise the awareness of comics as a tool in education.

The Words and Pictures Museum officially opened its doors October 13th, featuring art by Michael Ploog, Jack Kirby, Bill Sienkiewicz, Paul Mavrides & Gilbert Shelton, John Severin, Mark Martin, and Wally Wood.



FEMINA: Dream Girls

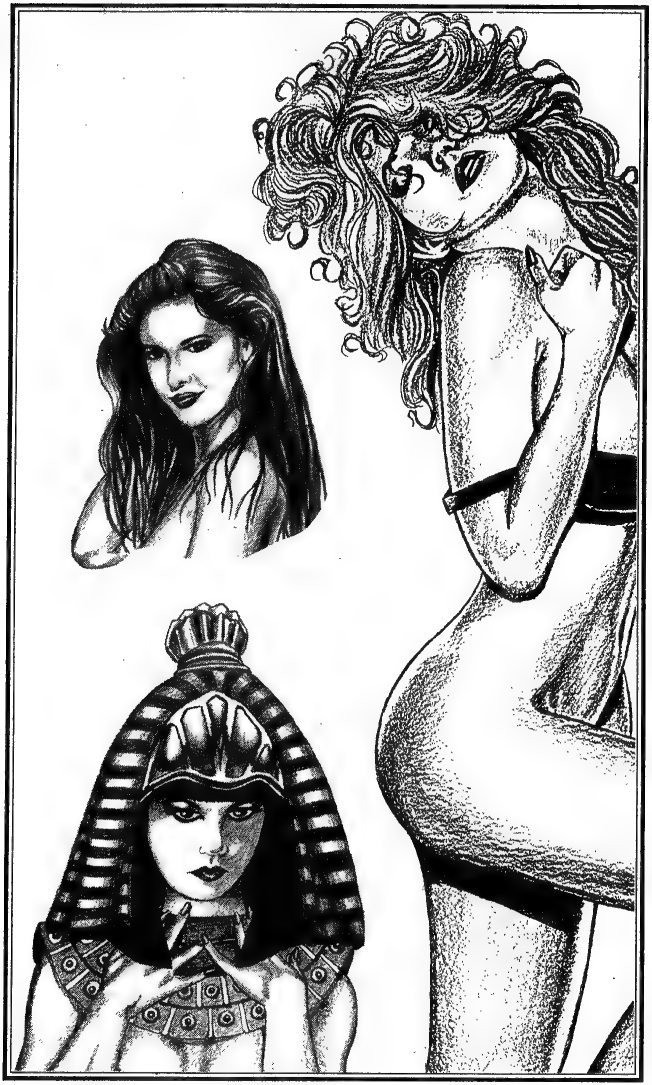
A Collection of Pin-Up Art by Lurene Haines
from Caliber Press

Femina: Dream Girls, a 32-page collection of black and white pin-up art by illustrator Lurene Haines, will be re-solicited for February 1993.

Artist Lurene Haines has selected a variety of fantasy women and rendered them with delicate pencil tones to achieve a soft yet realistic effect. Each piece portrays a female character, frequently semi-clad, in some fantasy setting or costume. The artist has attempted to find subject matter that will appeal to all tastes.

Included in the Femina book is an order form for full-color autographed prints available directly from the artist.

Femina also contains a voting ballot. This provides an opportunity for readers to comment on their favorite selections and supply their feedback on the package as a whole. Ultimately, the results of the voting ballot will be used for a Femina: Dream Girls art portfolio available in the spring of '93. The 10 most popular pieces from the book will be the basis for a portfolio of limited edition 11" x 14" fine-art prints, which will be packaged with a piece specially created for the portfolio. The deadline for voting is March 31, 1993.



An Interview With Sam Kieth on DARKER IMAGE

This December, Image Comics presents Darker Image, *an anthology title with a darker edge. One of the features,* The Maxx, *adds famed* Wolverine *artist Sam Kieth to the Image roster of creators. I had the distinct pleasure of speaking with Sam one evening about his new project.*

Hank Kanalz: Y'know, your name has been tossed around with Image for awhile now. You've been "attached" to the Darker Image *book since the beginning. How'd you get involved with Image comics?*

SK: I suppose it helps that I've done some things before. I felt kind of odd at the San Diego Con this last August. Someone in the audience asked how to get in at Image. And you know as well as I do that it's not exactly an easy thing to do—it certainly helps to have already done something.

HK: Something? I'd imagine you got a little exposure from Aliens *and your* Wolverine *work.*

SK: It's weird—when you get work, everyone wants to give you work, but when you're looking for work, no one wants to give it to you. *Aliens* was a nice jump start, but things really started to get strange after the *Wolverine* stuff. It was nice, in a way, before all this. And I don't mean to whine about it now, but it's different. I can't complain, though, because I could've said to myself, "Hey, I'll draw *Wolverine* in a popular way so I can get the attention." Instead, I get to draw *Wolverine* the way I want to, the way I would want to draw him even if I was thirteen. And I happen to like drawing characters with poor anatomy. It's a personal desire. That's terrible, I know! But I enjoy the way I draw *Wolverine*, and I guess other people do as well.

HK: Who approached you to do something with Image?

SK: I guess I actually started talking to Jim Lee early on—maybe not before Image started, but certainly before it really took off. I had actually called him to find out what his page rate was! (we laugh) I said, "I want to know how I'm doing at Marvel. Should I be pissed off?" And he said, "You're doing fine." And I don't know if he was telling the truth, but I bought it like an idiot! We kind of hit it off. I haven't talked to all that many of the other guys. I met Todd McFarlane for the first time in San Diego. And I just knew Jim through the Marvel stuff. Who'da thought that I would get along with them? Y'know, when I first heard what all these guys were doing, I thought they were nuts! Shows what a forward thinker I am.

HK: But you stuck with them. And here you are! The Maxx *starts off Image's first anthology book.*

SK: I was surprised with Jim's part of the book (*Deathblow*). Whether or not people like it, or whatever they criticize, it's different than Jim's other work! I like it, and the stuff I'm doing is a bit different, so the book is kind of an oddball thing. I hope the fans don't get out the knives and forks and eat us alive for being different!

HK: Tell us about The Maxx, *before we forget the reason we're here!*

SK: Well, he's a character I came up with a long time ago. *The Maxx* is a changed version of that. Bill Loebs is scripting, Steve Oliff is coloring it—some really good people are working on it. All the people who can make me look good are there! I just have to make sure that I can do as well with the artwork.

HK: Who's the strange little character I've seen pop up in the pages?

SK: There's a little guy with a beard in my stories I call The Captain. And he's a little finger that points. He's introduced like, "This is the Captain. He's here to ensure the storytelling is clear. He'll show up when the storytelling is weak, so you'll be seeing him a lot!" And I stuck the Captain in some other stuff I did. I want people to say, "Hey, who's that guy with the beard and cap? What's he doing here?" And they'll realize, "Oh, it's a Sam Kieth thing!" It's like Todd McFarlane's Felix the Cat thing.

HK: Who is The Maxx?

SK: Essentially he's...well, how should I put it? Y'know how there's the best and the strongest superheroes? And Spawn has the most power, but has only so many shots of it? Well, The Maxx is the kind of guy you peel off the bottom of your shoe. Wolverine is the best at what he does, and this guy's not so good (we laugh). He's not the best, but he does get the job done—as long as he goes up against weak guys. It's not really a comedy character, he's just an anti-hero!

HK: Well, everyone can't be the best.

SK: Right. So it's essentially The Maxx and The Girl who are the main characters. He's pretty much convinced he's out on this Aboriginal plain where giant pot-bellied monsters are attacking him with clubs. He's absolutely convinced this is going on! He meets this jungle woman who helps him. In her reality, the world's civilized, and The Maxx is a homeless man. He runs around, thinking he's in another world, so she helps him out. She grew up in the same generation I did, so she's about my age.

HK: How old's that?

SK: Let me think—hmmm...twenty-nine, I think. I try to forget...I'm trying to avoid thirty! So she grew up in the seventies and wears bell bottoms! The girl is a social worker and tries to help him out. So when The Maxx is a homeless guy, we're looking through her eyes. And when he's the more savage guy, it's through his eyes. Clear as mud, huh?

HK: So it's a dual-perspective story. The Maxx is living a different reality.

SK: Ah—well the question arises, who's reality is reality? Is she living the fantasy? Traditionally, she would be the one who's grounded in reality. I've been thinking of not making it clear, or making The Maxx's version the reality. I don't want to get too grandiose because we're initially doing this in eight page installments. When we do this as a book, we might experiment with the format. A very wise man gave me this advice (we laugh). It was very studiously pointed out to me by a knowledgeable individual that following up my *Darker Image* feature with a mini-series told from both perspectives would be a great thing to do. So hot damn, I'm doing it!

HK: Did you feel you were taking a risk, working with Image?

SK: Well, people like Jim Lee have made it with the kind of following he has. I'm nowhere near as popular, but I've turned down some reasonably high-profile projects to work on this. It's nice to be able to walk to something like this, rather than having to run to it. And I really enjoy what these guys at Image are doing.

HK: A lot of the other creators I've spoken to mention the enthusiasm Image generates with the creators. I imagine you picked up on that in San Diego, where all the Image creators appeared?

SK: Oh, yeah! I only went down to San Diego for a day, but it was great. I went there for the Image panel and got up there when they announced my name. I had total stage fright. Then the rest of the day I spent telling people I wasn't officially there. And I spent a couple of hours talking with Dale Keown in the Image suite.

HK: You and Dale recently did a joint cover for Wizard *magazine.*

SK: Yeah, that was a nightmare with scheduling! I got really intimidated, and I knew that Dale was going to be looking at it next. I wanted to do a really good job. I noodled away on it forever and sent it off to Dale, and he did this really great version of Pitt! It completely kicks ass! It looks great. I said, "My character's in front of yours, and yours STILL looks better!" It's very depressing. There's something about Dale's stuff right now that really clicks for me. He's got such confidence in his lines.

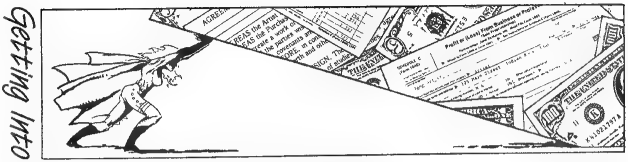
HK: Are you planning on doing anything with other Image characters?

SK: I'd like to do something with Dale! We've talked about it, but haven't figured it out yet. I also talked to Rob Liefeld about doing a Youngblood appearance. Remember when Spider-Man tried to join the FF, and he asked how much they pay? And they said they don't? I thought Maxx could try to join Youngblood and say, "I'll take 95%!" and bicker down from there. And of course they say no. And Maxx's version of the story will be that he goes to these bizarre natives!

HK: So it sounds like The Maxx *is going to keep you pretty busy.*

SK: Well, it's not like I'm *quitting* Marvel. I enjoy drawing Wolverine! I'll still be doing *Wolverine* covers for *Marvel Comics Presents* and I'll be the regular cover artist for *Detective* at DC. *The Maxx* gives me the opportunity to doing something I want to do and reach a very wide audience! And I know I'll enjoy it more because it's what I want to do, and I own it. I just want to have fun doing it. I know some people will stick it in bags, and they'll never see the light of day. And I know the critics will tear it apart, no matter how good it is. And as bizarre as all of this sounds, *The Maxx* will still appeal to the mainstream! There's plenty of action and violence! It's just a little more strange and bizarre action and violence. I just want to have fun!

The Maxx™ the new Sam Keith character from Darker Image



Getting Into The BUSINESS Of Comics

Intro: *"Gee, How Do I Get Into Comics?"*

by
Lurene Haines

*"I've **always** wanted to draw comics..."*
*"So just how did **you** get to work on comics?"*
"I've got this comic some friends and I drew in school, do you think you might like to publish it?"
"You know, I can draw as good as (fill in big name of your choice) so how come nobody will hire me?"
*"Gee, how do **I** get into comics?"*

The list of pleas, bizarre queries and strange comments goes on and on. Any professional in this strange business we call 'the comic book industry' can give you a list as long as their arm of the thoughtless, thoughtful and thought-provoking remarks made by aspiring comic professionals.

Basically this all boils down to one thing; they haven't taken the time to truly investigate what is involved in getting into the business of comics. And they just don't know where to start.

What Is The Business Of Comics?

The comic book industry has been an active part of our culture for more than 50 years. Although in the past the comic book was primarily a form of entertainment for kids, it has since evolved into a more diverse form of entertainment, appealing to young and old alike, and has generated a highly successful collectors market. All that aside, what the comic book represents for many in our culture is an alternate form of expression and creativity.

That means out there, somewhere, a potential artist or writer or editor is just itching to try their hand at generating their own unique interpretation of a comic book. They want to 'break into' the business.

Getting Into The Business

Which brings us to this series; *"Getting Into The Business Of Comics."*

These columns are not intended to tell you how to develop the 'talent' you need to get work. There are art schools, writing courses and business colleges that can do that much more effectively than my limited expertise, space or funds could ever hope. Instead, I'll offer suggestions and methods for improving your abilities. This series assumes that you feel you have reached a skill level adequate to pursue comic book work. I'll propose ways you can find out where you stand ability-wise, and hopefully provide some useful advice on how to deal with critiques and professional feedback. Ultimately, however, this series will deal with the *business* of getting work.

Over the next year I hope to shed some light on a variety of areas crucial for doing business in the comic industry. Or in many cases, **any** industry or business. Much of what I'll discuss will be basic common-sense information. You may find yourself thinking,

"Hey! *Everybody* knows that!"

But trust me, they don't.

In the six short years I've been a comic professional, I've worked very hard and tried to stay on top of all the latest business and professional information. I attend dozens of conventions and make numerous appearances each year, and at every one, without fail, some eager - though often timid - aspiring professional will come up and ask me what appears to be the silliest question with the most obvious answer.

But if I've learned nothing else, I've learned to respect the courage it took to ask a question that

might seem dumb to everyone else. And I always answer them as honestly and fully as I can. And with good humor.

And that's what I hope to do here.

I'll try to break down the different aspects of getting into this crazy business, and the various routes and methods you can utilize to make sure you have the greatest chance of securing your dream career.

Becoming A Professional Professional

There are a number of useful methods for understanding and learning how to navigate the tricky waters of the comic industry. You should utilize as many as you can.

Enthusiasm is indispensible. If you truly love what you do, then you'll produce work that you're happy with - sometimes work that will inspire you even further. That enthusiasm can be contagious, too. Other professionals like to deal with someone who clearly enjoys their work. Nothing will put you off a business deal faster than someone who can't share your enthusiasm or excitement for a project. But remember to keep it under control. Hyper-excitement is just as much a put-off as total lethargy!

Being a comic professional isn't the first job I've ever held, and I've found that many business techniques and methods I've used in other jobs have great application here. You should also bring *your own personal work experience* to bear in the comic industry.

Don't be afraid to ***ask questions***. People will respect you for wanting to do a good job. But remember, if you can look up the answer, do it! There's nothing that will shake confidence in you faster than the appearance of a professional who seems perpetually confused.

Probably the most important method for improving your chances getting work, and becoming a true professional, is your ***ability to listen***. I mean *really* listen.

Every time a business professional gives me advice, I *pay attention*. Often they haven't imparted any startlingly new insight, but they almost always give me a whole new perspective on that information. That always makes a big difference in approaching a business problem the next time around.

Hopefully this series will provide *you* with a whole new perspective - as well as a lot of new and useful information.

A Quick Overview of the Series

Next time we'll start by looking at ***An Overview of the Industry*** - it's competitive nature, and how your work might fit in or distinguish itself.

Then the series will continue with ***Preparing A Professional Portfolio*** - this will apply to both writers and artists. We will then consider ***Approaching Potential Employers*** - conventions, pro-feedback, making introductions, letters and sample packs, personal interviews, and adjustments based on critiques. We'll cover the ***Legal Business of the Biz***, and ***What To Do Now That You've Got The Job***. I'll also look at ***Special Cases: Creators Aren't The Only Working Stiffs In Comics***.

As an added bonus, a number of comic professionals have agreed to provide guest 'appearances'. They will contribute their insights and advice on getting into the business.

If you discover along the way that this doesn't seem to be **nearly** as much fun as you thought comics would be, then perhaps another business is more appropriate for you. Just keep one thing in mind; comics may be entertainment, but when all is said and done, *this is a business.*

Many young professionals have come to me, in a panic, for advice on salvaging a business arrangement that has gone bad. Almost without fail the problems resulted from negligence in following common-sense business procedure.

But bad decisions are not restricted to newcomers. Frequently an experienced, long-established professional finds themselves in a bad work situation. Again, it's most often due to a poor business decision - deals on a handshake, failure to nail down pertinent details in writing, or lack of information about the parties involved. Nobody's immune, both creators and publishers have been burned by bad business dealings.

This series is your opportunity to find out these crucial bits of preventative info **before** it's too late.

If you pay close attention and try out these suggestions, you'll have a great shot at getting your 'dream job'. Write with questions. I'll try to answer then in the column or drop you a personal note. Try not to jump ahead, though. I'll be covering everything as thoroughly as possible.

Each segment of this series will deal with one particular aspect of getting into comics, and conducting yourself as a professional. These will be the keys to open the door to your future success as a comic professional. It's up to you to use them properly.

Please mail inquires and comments to:
Arena Magazine, 264 Main Street, Florence, Kentucky 41042

Jerry Smith & Eric Breen

Thesis: Marvel Comics is past its prime and not in touch with the needs of the modern fan.

Jerry's Point:

Marvel Comics has become an unwieldy business full of corporate vultures who care for nothing but filling the company's already considerable coffers. They feel that a good story should not get in the way of making money, so they feed on fan loyalty and flood the market with useless, dreadfully bad comic books. All in the name of profit.

If we're going to discuss Marvel, let's get something straight. I love the characters of Marvel Comics. I grew up with Spider-Man, Thor, the Fantastic Four, the Avengers, and every other Lee/Kirby creation. I've been following the ups and downs of these characters for well over twenty years, and now that I'm approaching the big three-O, I still love 'em. I have no idea why I loved comics through the periods when my peers cared for only girls and cars and parties, I managed to do all that stuff and keep a healthy regard for comics. All I know is now that comics are closer than ever to coming into their own, Marvel is regressing instead of progressing, and has been for several years.

With the advent of so many intelligent choices of comics for adults and all ages, Marvel has been hard pressed to keep up. So they just ignored the maturing of comics and kept on chugging out the slop. What was Marvel's answer to classics like DC Comics' critically acclaimed ***Dark Knight*** *and* ***Watchmen****? Secret Wars and the* ***New Universe****. Worse, what has Marvel done to battle the competetion posed by the new, independent companies that publish intelligent, mature comics, like Dark Horse and Valiant? Instead of making their comics the best they could be, they cashed in on their vast name recognition and fan loyalty and pushed multitudes of new books onto the market. It never mattered if the book in question were of high quality, it just had to pander to the fan craze of the moment, whatever that might be.*

The present state of Marvel is constantly evolving with surprises. Every time I think the company's books can't get any worse, surprise! I can't help but think of all the favorites I grew up with and how terrible they all are today. The ***Fantastic Four*** *is a prime example. Taken to new heights by John Byrne in the eighties, Tom DeFalco has turned the book into a laughable showcase of how bad Marvel truly is. Same for the* ***Thor*** *title. Walt Simonson, where are you when we need you? The* ***Iron Man***

*comic, once a gem, is now an empty shell. **Spider-Man** has what, eighteen, nineteen different books devoted to his exploits on the market? They're all lessons in boredom except for Amazing. A friend asked me the other day what Marvel comics I was enjoying, and except for the **Hulk** and the **Punisher** books, I couldn't think of any.*

The act that drove me over the edge was the publication of Marvel's new horror series'. First of all, a Comics Code approved book is not going to contain any true horror stories, regardless of what Marvel's press releases say. I don't mean violence, the Code doesn't seem to mind that, I mean real horror, and the two can or cannot go hand in hand. These books contain no horror, that is, feelings of tense anticipation, dread or suspense. Marvel's new horror titles are about as suspenseful as an episode of Full House. And about as scary. These books are just the same 'ol same 'ol, blandly written and blandly drawn, just another marketing effort to get you to spend your money at Marvel instead of somewhere else.

This situation can be fixed. It would be nice if Marvel believed in the books they put on the market. Cancel every title a character appears in more than once. No more nineteen Spider-Man titles, fourteen Wolverine crossovers, and $100 Punisher hardcovers (okay, unless the story is really good). No more dreadful fill-ins by Stan Lee's brother or anybody else to whom an editor owed a favor. Marvel has become too big and has been owned by too many people. It's become a cash cow used for quick profit by its numerous owners. Slim the beast down, lose some bulk, and bring story standards up to at least a twelve year old's reading level. I want the rabble-rousing House of Ideas back from the seventies, not the slobbering, sleeping giant of the nineties.

Eric's Rebuttal:

It's Thursday night and I've just driven to the local comics shop. As I pull into the parking lot, I notice finding a spot is about as easy as finding a Bush supporter at the Clinton dinner table. What's going on? I claw my way into the store. It looks like vultures circling a dying animal. What gives? Oh yeah, it's new release time, when comics readers of all ages, shapes and sizes converge to buy heavily of the pulp filled shelves and to catch up on the exploits of their favorite characters. Cursing my lack of patience for not waiting until Friday, I enter the fray. New release day is the industry's answer to happy hour, as fans and readers also use this time to socialize. With comics being the only common denominator for many of them, it is almost always the topic of conversation.

"Did anything from Innovation make out this week?"

"Hey, look, another ten new titles from Marvel."

"You gonna get any of 'em"?

"Hell no, it's just more Marvel pap flooding the market."

Marvel bashing is very "en vogue" these days. It's nothing new to pick on number one in any walk of life. McDonald's, Garth Brooks, the W.W.F.–the list goes on and on. How can McDonald's be so popular if no one eats there? How can Garth Brooks sell millions of records if no one will admit they like him? How can Marvel still be number one with the crap they publish? Only geeks, zombies, and fanboys read Marvel. The truth is, you read Marvel comics, maybe more of them than you think.

I know what you're thinking, Marvel publishes 9,000 books a month, one or two of them are going to be good. "Oh yeah, the Punisher books are good, I do read them", you say. Fact is, Marvel publishes a lot of good books, *Namor*, *The Hulk*, *Nomad*, *Ghost Rider*, and *Dr. Strange* just to name a few. *The Hulk*, for example, is arguably the best title in comics today, period. As for single stories, even my esteemed point man Mr. Smith would agree that one would be hard pressed to top *Nomad* #7, "The Infinity Gambit".

"Big deal", you might say, "you named two books". There are many others, but something needs to be pointed out. Marvel is a huge company, with books that appeal to every kind of reader. Unlike its small press competition, Marvel has an obligation and a commitment to publish its titles on a monthly basis, on time. We laugh when three months go by since the release date has passed on *Nexus* or *Lost in Space*, saying the wait will be worth it. Would we be so tolerant with *Punisher* or *X-Men*? Of couse not, and we don't have to worry about it. It's not easy to maintain a monthly schedule at a company the size of Marvel. They are often criticized for their lack of great literary masterpieces. It's not quite as difficult for writers such as Alan Moore and Frank Miller to create

excellence when they have a year to do that and little else. Marvel doesn't have that luxury. Nor can they afford to skip a beat when some of their best talent decides almost simultaneously that they are better than the industry itself and form their own company (let's talk marketing effort). Yet Marvel continues to publish more than its share of quality titles. Many readers spend too much time lambasting Marvel to notice that.

In the past several years, Marvel has developed modern versions of characters that in the past were merely fill-ins, afterthoughts, or back-ups. Characters such as *Cage*, *Namor*, *Morbius*, *Ghost Rider*, *Nomad*, *Wonderman*, *Johnny Blaze*, the *Punisher*, and the list goes on. They have given new life to these and other characters and made them interesting and more enjoyable. Was this even necessary for the number one comics company?

Ten years ago, the comics industry was stale. The absolute lack of competition on the part of companies such as Charlton and Atlas had allowed Marvel and DC to get complacent. Small press companies such as First, Comico, and Eclipse changed that with the emergence of new universes (no cheap shots, please) and new characters unrestricted by the Comics Code Authority. Marvel and DC, like two school yard bullies who hadn't had anyone fight back in years were forced to sit up and take notice. DC recreated their universe, telling us that its first forty-five years were now a giant library of "What If" stories. Marvel, on the other hand, redefined theirs.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not trying to canonize Marvel. They have their share of faults. They do tend to spread themselves too thin at times. And their spiteful treatment of certain individuals has been appaling to say the least. However, Marvel is a business, and businesses make mistakes. As to their tendencies to overuse certain characters and punish our wallets with gatefold and hologram covers, they are certainly not alone in this practice (see *Teen Titans, Robin*, etc.) Let us not forget that Marvel is in business to make money. So is everyone else in comics. Why do you think everyone with an idea for a prestige format or miniseries turns it into a Batman story?

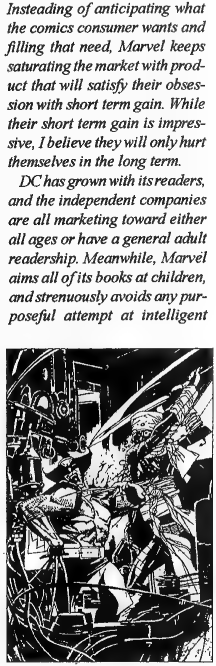
I enjoy Marvel comics now as I have for seventeen years. To me they are as fun and as entertaining as they were when I was a child. It doesn't hurt that most titles I read are better written and drawn now than they were when I was younger. For some good old fashioned escapism, give me the *Fantastic Four* or *Spider-Man* anytime. I do admit that I get a little tired of seeing the *Punisher*, *Wolverine* or *Ghost Rider* crossover in every non-Barbie Marvel title. However, I'm realistic enough to know that no company is in this business purely for the love of comics. I get tired of hearing people blast Marvel for being what it is, a business, without even reading many of its titles.

The bottom line is that Marvel has a bottom line. Just like any business. Still, month in and month out, they publish a line of comics large enough to feature something for everyone. While not all of it is great, it is certainly better than most give it credit for being. I'm not saying that they are the best, but they are, from top to bottom, far from the worst. I'll bet that there are a few "must read" Marvel titles in even the most descriminating reader's arsenal. In today's market, that's all we can really ask of a business. As for those who bash Marvel simply because it is so fashionable, as you wait those extra two months for the next *Hero Alliance*, perhaps it isn't Marvel who's sleeping.

Jerry's letter to Eric:

For the record, I have no problem with McDonald's, Garth Brooks, or W.W.F. wrestling. But I do have a problem with Marvel. As a matter of fact, let's use Mickey Dee's as an example for a moment. McDonald's has been number one in fast food for twenty years for a reason. They are constantly changing and evolving their company's products, offering new menu choices, cheap pricing strategies, and good value for the consumer dollar. Marvel has done just the opposite. Insteading of anticipating what the comics consumer wants and filling that need, Marvel keeps saturating the market with product that will satisfy their obsession with short term gain. While their short term gain is impressive, I believe they will only hurt themselves in the long term.

DC has grown with its readers, and the independent companies are all marketing toward either all ages or have a general adult readership. Meanwhile, Marvel aims all of its books at children, and strenuously avoids any purposeful attempt at intelligent



storytelling. If a Marvel book appeals to a sophisticated reader, it's more a result of coincidence than intent. It's true that Marvel has some enjoyable comics, but three or four titles out of the forty-plus they publish is not a very good ratio.

I think a fundemental difference between us is that I don't prize quantity over quality. So what if Marvel publishes all of their books on time if they all stink? I'd rather wait a year between Hero Alliances than settle for the blandness of one issue of The Avengers.

As for making money, I don't have a problem with Marvel making scads of money. In fact, it's probably good for the entire industry to keep Marvel healthy. I just wish they had products that justified their being so successful. It burns me when fans pass up a quality title from another company to buy the latest "Atlantis Attacks" crossover. That's not all Marvel's fault (after all, for some reason people are buying this stuff), but for a company to not strive to be the finest they could be cheats both themselves and their customers.

The bottom line is, the company has to cultivate future audiences, which their present marketing strategy isn't doing. I don't think the company even realizes the buying power of the market they're ignoring; adults. With jobs. With money. In ten years, the young Marvel reader will have moved on to the independent companies or switched to novels or movies for entertainment. Perhaps Marvel will capture new young readers, perhaps not. But what will happen to Marvel and the comics industry in general if they don't? How many New Universes will it take for fans to pick up their toys and go home?

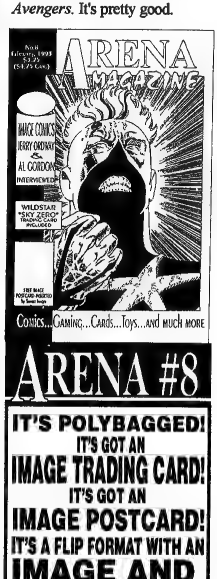
Eric's fax to Jerry:

To borrow a quote from the warden in *Cool Hand Luke*, "What we have here is a failure to communicate". I'm not trying to say that Marvel has the best comics on the market, but they serve a viable, valuable, purpose in the industry.

There is nothing wrong with Marvel positioning itself to appeal to the youth market. But to say that only little kids can enjoy Marvel is simply not true. One of the valuable assets of comics is the ability to appeal to all ages, which Marvel does. Younger readers can gain an entirely different sense of enjoyment from a Marvel comic than an adult. Marvel's intent is not to create deep intellectual masterpieces on a monthly basis. Marvel provides stability in the industry, which is something this genre desperately needs. For over thirty years Marvel has maintained a lineup of comics with something for everyone. For a longtime reader like myself, there is the history of an ever changing, evolving cast of characters that have provided entertainment and escape. That's what I look for in a comic. That's all a comic book really needs to be.

Don't misunderstand me, I like an intellecutal masterpiece as much as the next reader. I'll go on record as saying that my favorite comics story ever was *Miracle Man* #1-7. No Marvel story has ever or will ever in all likelihood come close to that one. However, if that was all I was looking for in literature, I'd read more Shakespeare (well, I'd start reading Shakespeare). I think many comic book readers take themselves and comics too seriously. Comics, like any other form of entertainment, should be varied and different. Marvel is just that, and they are fun reading. Sometimes I don't want to read a sixty-four page prestige format book, then say it must have been great because I didn't understand any of it (which we have all done at one time or another).

Marvel comics may not be for everyone, nothing is. Again, they deserve better than the snobbish treatment they get from some comics readers. We can't afford descrimination within the genre like that. Let's face it, this isn't the most respected or accepted form of entertainment. However, if a reader chooses to snub Marvel remember this: if not for Marvel, the comics industry as we know it would not exist, period. As you read that *Hero Alliance* you've waited six months for, thank Marvel for that. While you're at it, pick up the latest issue of *The Avengers*. It's pretty good.



BRIT BITS

News and gossip from across the ocean.

by **Paul H. Birch**

Unlike US annuals which for the most part appear during summer-time, Great Britain's larger hard-bound variety are stocking-filers for kids at Christmas. The 2000AD related books offer a substantial amount of new work compared to others which consist mainly of reprint material. But just to confuse everybody, last year the group retitled their annuals to yearbooks, giving them gate-fold soft covers. The new *Judge Dredd Yearbook* is 96 pages of Mega-City mayhem behind a Brendan McCarthy cover, and for *2000AD Doormat Power* interprets fictional alien editor, Tharg carving a head bust of Joe Dredd.

As if you hadn't guessed, *Judge Dredd* spells big-bucks over here. The bi-weekly *Judge Dredd Megazine* proved a saving of face for what was Fleetway Publications, before Robert Maxwell died under whatever circumstances the media are now proscribing to, and Dutch company, Gutenberg, owner of London Editions (then based in Manchester!) took over lock, stock and te the newly named Fleetway Editions. The preceding years had produced few winners: Crisis came on with good intentions, but ultimately low sales, *Revolver* was an ongoing party for just over half a dozen issues and a promotional account we're not likely to see in this country for at least another decade, and *Xpresso* had long-term potential but by then the coffers had dried-up. The independently produced *Deadline* continues to survive, due to less crippling business overheads, and publishers who're possibly more in touch with their fashion-conscious audience. What did Fleetway need? Yep, more Dredd! No nonsense shoot-outs with dark-edged humour. Ironic, that when I.P.C. owned the company a few years previously they'd passed up on doing the solo title, isn't it!

A recent title, that's playing it low key from the company but appears to be selling okay, is *Red Dwarf Smegazine* based on the sci-fi comedy TV series. It includes text features, adaptations of the show, and new comic strip material. Initially facing some criticism from Dwarf fans who can be likened to Trekkies, and *Dr. Who* enthusiasts it appears to be on the turnabout popularity wise, as regular artist, Jon Rush by comments: "I think it's at last been accepted as a comic strip in its own right as much as two books and a television show. And I think it has plenty to offer comic fans in general".

Alan Burrows has also worked on Red Dwarf, American readers may be more familiar with his *Dr. Giggles* art for Dark Horse. Now, most British comic book artists do both the pencilling and inking on strips, a noticeable exception being Mark Farmer, and when Al' was called on to ink Kent Burles' pencils for the actual *Dr. Giggles* film adaptation he was apprehensive, saying "I

tried to follow him line for line rather than change his work, which I'd hate anyone to do to mine."

Dark Horse International is now set up on these shores. Lilian Bolton (wife of artist, John) is Managing Director,and Dick Hansom recently took over the Editorial Director's seat from Michael Bennent. Their first title, Aliens, reprints the US comic book work along with text features on the films.

Aliens was formerly published by Trident, whose parent company Neptune have suffered some heavy losses in recent years: no longer a distributor, the Trident comic line went the way of the Titanic, and *Toxic*! uniting the major contributors from *2000AD*'s heydays crashed with much acrimony from all involved. Neptune's now focussing on reprinting *Star log* magazines

The new *Aliens* will also be publishing material as yet unseen in the US, an example being *Aliens: Sacrifice*, by *Shade, the Changing Man* scripter, Pete Mulligan and illustrated by Paul Johnson. This will be a full colour, 48 page one-shot for American readers. A *Terminators* reprint title also recently appeared, but the new year sees the company set to introduce, or liaise on behalf of the parent company, new non-licensed material by several creators including Pat Mills and Bryan Talbot.

Marvel UK's now been established over here for twenty years with many a fan first catching sight of Spider-Man and The Hulk in a larger black and white format. Despite this, the company really only made a mark for itself on the market place via assorted nursery (pre-school) and TV related comics such as *Dr. Who* and *Transformers*, save for the last twelve months that is as they surge ahead with numerous new projects

Paul Neary returned to the company as Editorial director, and with Senior Editor, John Freeman set about creating a seemingly Cohesive

Marvel UK universe. Old characters such as *The Knights of Pendragon* and *Death's Head* were given a second chance and new characters like *Digitek* and *Killpower* began to appear in the anthology, *Overkill*. US readers may have purchased these characters in their individual comics, and this was something that upset a number of British readers as your versions contained additional material to that seen in *Overkill*. Fortunately these detrimental factors are being rectified.

Marvel UK plans to release 18 new titles over the next year. It's assumed that many of these will be in US sized formats, and sold mainly by the direct distribution network on both sides of the atlantic as the likelihood of this number of titles surviving solely on the predominantly sales-or-return method of British newsstand distribution wouldn't bare serious monetary consideration.

The Exploits of Spider-Man is the latest reprint incarnation for the webbed one over here, it also includes text features and for a few issues, *Pendragon II*.

New artist to that series, John Royle is pleased that the UK branch is originating superhero material saying, "I grew up with a feeling for the Marvel Universe and it's characters. It's a company I've always wanted to work for. *Pendragon II* couldn't have been a better strip for me, I've enthusiasm for it and like John and Dan's (Tomlinson and Abnett, co-work".

It's always interesting to see how other nations portrayone's own in comics - No, we Brits don't go round wearing bowler hats, and our environment's much the same as yours, both the good and the bad bits, just on a smaller scale. In recent years many American editors have chosen writers and artists living in the same territory as ongoing storylines. Mike Collins who's scripting/pencilling *Thunderbolt* for DC has the character based in our capital, and says, "I'm trying to use London in the same way Frank Miller used New York in *Daredevil*; to give the whole place the role of a character. It's going to be set in London for first half-year of the book because of a major storyline, but there are going to be stories set elsewhere". Collins has also created a Welsh supervillain, who debuted in the first issue. "But unless you're Welsh, you won't know who he is without his name". Over at Marvel, Alan Davis with Mark Farmer have *Excalibur* set here, but the storyline takes precedence over localities, whilst DC's *Hell blazer* is the bane of the British tourist board revealing as it does less savory aspects hereabouts.

Wolf Publishing's a new company on these shores with Lee Felix' *The Phantom* as their flagship title. Currently reprinting color work from Scandinavia's Sumac Press plus new covers by such stalwarts as John Ridgway, Steve Pugh and Brett Ewins. Editor, Phil Clarke hints that "We're looking towards creating new material in the near future". While no contracts have been signed as yet, some interesting names are being bandied about.

We're no longer an Empire - Thank God, descendants of those our forefathers persecuted, cry out! - but we're still here, and still publishing comic material both for ourselves, and the world-market. A lot of what we put out is understandably garbage, but there are some rough diamonds amongst the dross. If work by British creators for Marvel, DC or Dark Horse has interested you in the past, when next in your favorite comic shop ask them if their distributor can get hold of any original British comics, both Capital and Diamond distribute certain titles.

And tell them *Arena Magazine* sent you!

Spotlight On...

MADMAN ADVENTURES

by Mike Allred and presented by Tundra Publishing

Announcing the launch of an all-new, continuing adventure series by Mike Allred: *Madman Adventures*. Beginning this December, *Madman Adventures #1* will kick off with the first of a two-part story.

In 32-page color comic book format, the first two comics make up the first adventure, a 64-page, self-contained story that's being released in these special comic book format Advance Editions. With a cover price of only $2.95, they're in full "pop art" color. These editions will be printed strictly to order and will never again be made available in this format.

The complete 64-page first adventure (Volume One) will later be released in its permanent squarebound edition, in the *Madman Library format*. Volume One will have the *Madman Timewarp Jam* cover by Mike Allred, with objects drawn in a swirling vortex by 38 different artists, including Art Adams, Paul Chadwick, Geof Darrow, Mike Mignola, Adam Hughes, Todd McFarlane, Steve Rude, Matt Wagner and many more! It will also have a back cover by Geof Darrow.

Part one is a cliffhanger! *Madman* gets a date with Joe but he's caught in Doctor Flem's time machine... will he get back in time for his date? Some secrets are revealed as new mysteries develop. It's also got a special feature: a back cover *Madman Exhibition Gallery*, this time with guest artist Richard Sala. The conclusion, part two of Volume one, includes special mystery guest inks by Harvey Award winner (Best Artist) Mark Schultz.

"It's my favorite book," says artist Mike Mignola (*Cosmic Odyssey, Dracula*), "I love it. It's amazingly well drawn, it's got a great story... I can't wait for the new series to start!"

NOW, YOU LISTEN TO ME, I'VE OVER THROWN ONE AND HAVE BEEN MAKING MY OWN DECISIONS SINCE I WAS TWELVE. BESIDES, I'VE ALREADY TOLD HIM HIS ASSPET WON'T DO HE ALREADY KNOWS. YOU'RE NOWHERE'S... HE JUST WANTS TO MARRY YOU.

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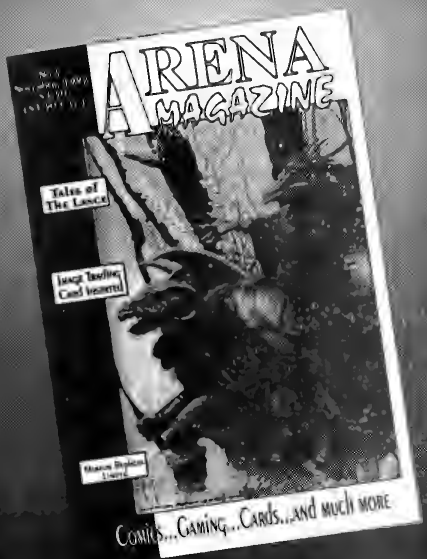

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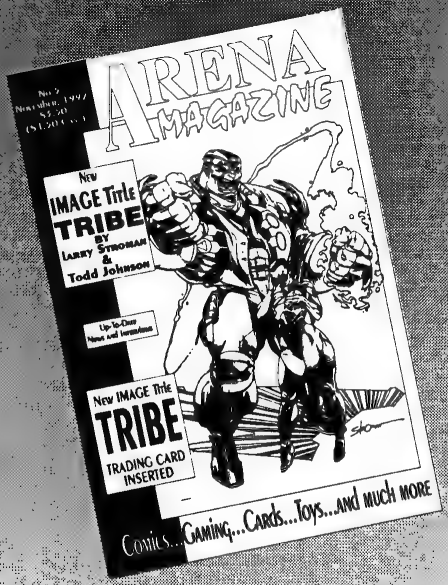

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NEWSFLASH!

How Do You Like Your Stake?

Have you seen it? It's sharp. Sharp as a wooden stake! It's White Wolf's *Vampire: The Masquerade, 2nd edition* and it's a hardback. If you're not familiar with the new *Vampire* game, it's the world of deadly Archons and treacherous Tremere, where ancient Inconnu play their games against a backdrop of horrid Diablerie and all dread the coming of Gehenna. The Storytelling game of *Vampire* has already fascinated thousands of gamers and provides the anchor for the entire Storyteller line. Now, it's even better. The hardcover edition offers new art, easier and more developed rules and expanded background information. It's easily compatible with all the printings of the exceptionally popular 1st edition, as well as the many supplements published.

Speaking of supplements, in November look for the *Who's Who Among Vampires: Children of the Inquisition*. From the flames of the Inquisition sprang the two warring factions of the Undead - the Camarilla and the infamous Sabbat. This first 9" x 12" portrait book details those Vampires who came of age during this time of horror. And in December, there is the *Sabbat Player's Guide*. The most feared organization of Undead in existence, the Sabbat is the main foe of *Vampire* players. This *Player's Guide* provides extensive information about this terrible Sect, including history, new Clans and rules for running one of the Sabbat. Without a doubt, the most awaited *Vampire* supplement for both players and Storytellers.

Now's a good time! Ride the wave of the newest Vampire craze! What with the movie and all...

White Wolf is also the producers of *Werewolf*, *Ars Magica* and *White Wolf Magazine*.

Strategic Knights

Look out! *Knights: Strategies in Motion* from Wizards of the Coast provides gamemasters with three complete, fully developed divine organizations that can be used directly as campaign religions or as models for creating other religious hierarchies. For each of three lesser deities - representing combat, magic and death - the book covers statistics, abilities, controlled planes, and artifacts as well as personality and philosophy. Then each deity's subordinates fron demigods down through servitors and even several levels of priests, are presented along with descriptions of their abilities and duties within the organization. Written by Nigel Findley, author of *Pawns: The Opening Move*, this reference for *The Primal Order* will give gamemasters the tools they need to create detailed scenarios for both religious PCs and those who would challenge the gods.

Price is $15. Ships in January.

Gaming News

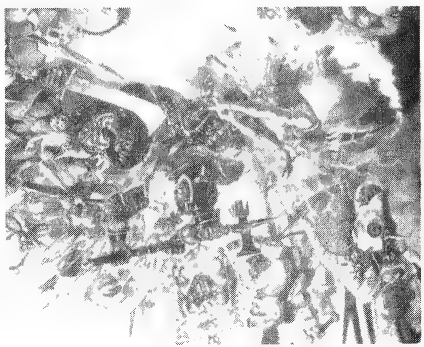
A World Of Hobby Games

One of the fabulous settings in which the Games Workshop world is based is entitled *Warhammer Fantasy*. If you're not familiar with this Workshop locale, then the next couple of paragraphs will give you a good idea.

Warhammer Fantasy centers on the threat of dark powers upon the brave but fragile human kingdoms of the Old World. Chaos Champions and their monstrous followers descend from the wastelands, driven by daemons and dark magic to a bitter war of conquest. To defend themselves, human nations - chief among them the Empire - must gather mighty armies and harness magic to its own side. Against this background of desperate and destructive conflict the human nations muster armies to compete for pre-eminence. Ferocious monsters such as the green-skinned Orcs and Goblins maraud across the frontiers, looting and destroying everything in their path. In the mountains, the last inhabitants of the Dwarf Kingdom struggle to maintain their tentative grip on their ancient fortress, whilst in the forests Wood Elves prepare their keen-eyed archers for renewed combat. It is a world torn apart by war, where Man, Dwarfs and Elves must fight the eternal battle against Chaos.

The Warhammer World is the setting for all Games Workshop's fantasy games including *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* - the game of heroic conflict between deadly armies. It's a tabletop battlegame in which mighty armies of men, monsters and fantastic war machines clash in mortal combat. The color illustrated rulebook tells you everything you need to know about collecting armies and fighting battles in the Warhammer World. A battle can be as large or as small as you like, ranging form small skirmishes with thirty or so models a side, up to massive campaigns featuring hundreds of troops and fought over several days! The *Warhammer Fantasy* rulebook contains descriptions and rules for all the races, monsters and warmachines in Warhammer as well as rules on selecting and organizing your army, through to shooting, moving, magic and hand-to-hand combat. *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* is much more than a single rulebook, it's an exciting hobby with a huge range of fantastic miniatures, books and boxed sets to add to your growing collection: Skeletons, Dragons, Chariots, Giants, and even the Mighty Fortress are all readily available, together with supplementary rulebooks and paint sets you'll need to prepare your forces for battle.

Games Workshop makes dozens of new models every month! To get the full range of the immensity of *Warhammer* and other Games Workshop products, check out *White Dwarf* magazine - the magazine dedicated to the Games Workshop hobby. *White Dwarf* is published every month with new articles about modelling, painting, gaming, and news of all the latest Citadel and Marauder Miniatures.



2995...A Vintage Year

In December, from Mayfair Games, gamers can look forward to *2995: The Legion of Super-Heroes Sourcebook*! DC's most popular comic team of the future is detailed in this 128-page sourcebook for the *DC Heroes Role-Playing Game*. Its release will coincide with the explosive unveiling of the new DC Comics *Legion* title, *Legionnaires*. This unique sourcebook feature over 300 characters, their friends, their foes and detailed maps of the galaxy! For just $14 smackers, you can have this supplement that is an essential add-on to your already extensive DC role-playing files. Ships in December.

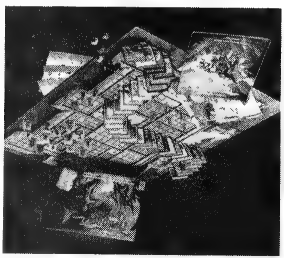
Every Adventure Is Different

Introducing *Dragon Quest*, an exciting new adventure game from TSR, Inc. Just in time for the holidays, it's great for every gamer on your gift list...and even those who are not, but may be interested. For youngsters especially, but *Dragon Quest* is also for those who may be interested in gaming but felt that it was just too much to comprehend initially. TSR has geared this game to be simple to understand and it's a fantastic introduction into the world of role playing.

It's exciting adventure! Players create heroic warriors and go on exciting quests in a treacherous adventure world. The action builds as players uncover traps, escape monsters and battle dragons. If they work together, they'll discover treasure and return as heroes!

The *Dragon Quest* game is packed with hero and monster cards, adventure books, dice and a huge gameboard... and the specially marked boxes also contain 6 free metal heroes - and a free *Dragon Quest* T-shirt offer! It's well worth every bit of your hard-earned cash! And if it's a gift, they'll think you're the greatest thing since the invention of the wheel!

The fun never ends with the Dragon Quest game. Every adventure is different and the game can be played over and over for hours of monster-bashing fun. The Dragon Quest game by TSR can be found at Toys R Us, Waldenbooks, B. Dalton bookstores, and toy and hobby stores everywhere. It's for 2 to 6 players, ages 10 and up. Suggested retail is $22.95.



1993 Gen Con Update

Don't wait! Plan now to be part of the biggest gaming convention of the world, the *1993 Gen Con Game Fair*, August 19-22 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin! The convention will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the *Dungeons & Dragons* game.

Join more than 18,000 gaming fans and play in hundreds of adventure games, board games, military games, computer games, and the world's largest role-playing tournament... the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Open*. That's right! More than 1,000 games, tournaments, demonstrations, seminars! Special "Early Bird" reservations are due December 31st, 1992.

When paying the Early Bird registration fee of just $35 ($40 on site), all early registrants get a free *1993 Gen Con Game Fair T-shirt*, too! It's a $20 value that's not available anywhere else.

Here's more! Register now and TSR will also send *advanced housing reservation forms* and the gigantic *convention pre-registration brochure* to you before they are sent to the general public! So, register soon! All Early Bird registration forms must be postmarked by December 31, 1992. Registration forms are available by faxing Sandy Kinney at (414) 248-0389, or sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

1993 GEN CON Game Fair, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. Copies are also in *Dungeon* and *Dragon* magazines.

The Gaming Fool's Review: Tales of the Lance

by **Tony Parsons**

AH! Greetings from the **Gaming Fool**! 'Tis good to have returned to the company of fellows such as you! I am certain that your mind has brought to fore, once or thrice, what I have been about this month past and thus, knowing of your abounding curiosity, I shall sate thee. Deep in the dark drudgery of the forests near to where I dwell, there is a cave. A cave so abysmal in essence and form that it drains the very soul of those wayfarers who deem to enter its cavernous depths. The Gaming Fool, however, is of stalwart nature and a far more hearty soul than those of average peculiarities and so, as you might have guessed by now, I journeyed forth with naught but boots, a flashlight and my wits. Deep I wandered, ever so deep, when what did I come upon but the Dawk Wetaiwer (dark retailer). He cackled maniacally, and hideously if I may tell thee, and brandished a deadly tome of immense nature... a price guide. Swiftly did I start, leaping over him and snatching that which I had come for. With a HA! and a bound away I made for the closing gates. A duck! A leap! A mighty roar! I was away! And thus I come to you, my prize in hand...a boxed edition of *Tales of the Lance*.

The world of Krynn has been around for ten glorious years. The *Dragonlance* sagas have been brought forth in novels, anthologies, modules, and sourcebooks. For those of you who are not familiar with the *Dragonlance* saga, where the heck have you been? On another planet? Anyway, boy are you in for a treat among treats! Why? Because I'm going to give my own little rendition of the Saga of the Lance, that's why. You ready? Okay, here goes!

One hurried night, fleeing from the anger of the townsfolk of Solace with his companions, Raistlin Majere stared into the starry sky with his hourglass eyes and his brow furrowed in confusion. "The stars," he said, "they've changed!" And they had. Amidst the countless patterns of constellations something was amiss. Several stars had vanished, they were gone. The gods had forsaken the world of Krynn and thus their constellations, Paladine, Takhisis, Gilean and others had disappeared from the night sky.

What could this mean? Raistlin wondered, as did his companions. Here had begun a long and arduous journey for these folk who would come to be known as the Companions of the Lance. Indeed the Gods had abandoned the world of Krynn and the people that once had worshipped them. Without the Gods, the arts of healing and the true ways of the clerical order of Ansalon were lost to the land. The Saga of the Lance begins when the promise of hope originates with the sudden appearance of a beautiful plainswoman and the strange blue crystal staff that she bears. Ten of them, thrown together by the whims of Fate, the Companions would be travailed by legions of trying and taxing adventures and predicaments. Some of them will end up giving their lives for the quest's cause and others will come to realize their hidden destinies.

Ah, the Companions . . . characters that you will grow to love and, perhaps, to hate. In the all-knowing opinion of the Gaming Fool the novels are magnificently written. The stories and sagas are extremely compelling and I would suggest that if you had not read *The Dragonlance Chronicles* by Weis and Hickman then get you gone and achieve these books! Read them for they are well worth it. Multitudinous writings abound in your area and any other you may find yourself milling throughout. Hours of enjoyment await thee.

However, several compatriots and learned colleagues in my acquaintance have complained, "Verily! This just is not enough!" Those at TSR have realized this, as I knew they would, and have released the *Dragonlance* boxed set, entitled *Tales of The Lance*. This set includes maps, a *Talis Card Deck*, and the World Book of Ansalon. What is a Talis Card Deck, you ask? I shall tell you. It serves many functions. The deck allows the Dungeon Master to gen-

erate simple adventures, role-play fortune-telling scenes, and popular card games that rely upon suits and numbers. It takes a creative DM to use them properly but when used right, ah, they do much to enhance the game. Also, in the pack of cards, are statistics for characters from Sturm Brightblade and Tasslehoff Burrfoot to the rest of the Heroes of The Lance and other popular faces. These character cards allow the players to see the Heroes when they had just taken up the quest to defeat The Queen of Darkness. In this brand-spanking new Gaming Fool's opinion, the cards are obviously an advantageous source for adventures.

The *World Book of Ansalon* goes into much greater depth than the hardback sourcebook did. It describes the entire continent of Ansalon in full and rich detail and gives the full history of Ansalon. It presents a timeline of all the major events, starting from the creation of the world to the final great Dragon War. The sourcebook acquaints the reader with all of the lands that compose the continent of Ansalon, ranging from the islands of Mithas and Kothas to the high plains of Solamnia. The lands are described by their capital, main populace, languages, national alignment, and goverment and the geography, climate, and trading habits are also added. The *World Book* gives a flavorful description of the major races of Ansalon, their cultures, history, attitudes about other races, and weapons, dress, and special items. It details minimum and maximum ability scores for all races and sub-races, a listing of all character classes and the individual's maximum level all presented in a neat, clear-cut table. Special classes such as the Solamnic Knights, Wizards of High Sorcery, and Priests of the True Gods are discussed and the book gives descriptions of characters, monsters, animals, and items that your adventurous party may encounter. Overall, if you want to know as much as possible about Ansalon, The World Book of Ansalon is a masterful and necessary source of information for the game.

Thus, if I may advise you, a new world of adventure awaits you in *Tales of the Lance*. Ansalon and the world of Krynn have never been so fully rendered than in this boxed set. Whether you're familiar with *Dragonlance* or, especially if you're not, then this is the one to get.

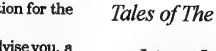
One is inclined to wonder, I am sure, "Who is this Fool? Is he just another one of the many who cow before the might of TSR? One who gives them praise because it is the cautious trend and so very highly in the fashion of late?"

I say to thee NAY!!! Years of roleplaying have I attained and I am extremely familiar with the Dungeons and Dragons system, as well as many others, and I praise the company for all of their transcendent creativity and playability. Wherein worlds of pure legend and unbridled imagination allow individuals such as we, you and I, to accommodate all too easily. Roleplaying with D&D and AD&D are the stuff of our very dreams, and offer the best, if not, among the best of fantasy worlds. Pride shalt never allow myself to bow and pay homage to anything under the stars and heaven, but even I, the Gaming Fool, must address rightful due to the sheer splendor of the D&D worlds. Truly, I have found pleasure in the world of Krynn, equalled by none other save closely by TSR's own Forgotten Realms. Suspect me not! I would not lead thee under false pretenses!

Ensuing is my rating of the game:

Tales of The Lance

Interest Level



Playability

Originality

Fun Level

Ah, here we are at the end of our journey. Do not grieve and mourn for I shall return with yet another Knowledge-Packed Review of White Wolf's *Vampire* and its sister game, *Werewolf*. Soon, my friends, I shall return and then the Heavens will announce my arrival and the Gates of the Unimaginative shall fall before my righteous wrath! Until the winds of change howl and the Earth passes into shadow, I bid you good journey, and safe return.

Tony Parsons
"Gaming Fool."

ROLE PLAYING PRINCIPLES: WHY & HOW

by Joe Martin

Creo Imagonem.

White Wolf Games, in their *Ars Magica 3rd edition*, states that this terminology is Latin for "to create from the imagination". That is Role-Playing. Okay then, what I'm about to engage in here is a few words proffering my thoughts about this innovative source of entertainment.

First and foremost, allow me to be on with my gripe so that we can clear the air. Role-playing is a much misunderstood endeavor by today's uninspired commonfolk. For those really right-wing, jump-to-the-conclusion-and -I'm-always-right conservatives, it is a procedure that stems from diabolicism and the insane mind. Those people are quick to accuse gaming as a deterrent and a harmful constituent to today's youthful masses. Ha! I laugh at those cantankerous dolts! These are the kind of people who thrive on controversy as being a reason to live. They'll carry any banner in any crusade as long as it gives them something to do instead of sit around on their big butts and contemplate how truly pathetic is their irksome existence. This really bothers me. In the famous words of Henry V, "My God! Why should they mock poor fellows thus?!". Get 'em, King Harry.

Let me get on to why I think people role-play. Why and who should be more of the point here. Life is droll. It offers little but reality (get use to this word because I use it a lot) itself and many of us can get bogged down, lost in realism and day-to-day goings-on. What escape is there? What could aid many of us in coping with the facts? People who suffer from what I have come to call the *The Displacement Syndrome* - a displacement of soul and mind in an endless warp of time and reality - are my focus here and these are the folk who role-play or "game".

Following is a run-down of the different types of people who are victims of this unfortunate occurrence. I say "may", however. I'm not talking about the occasional gamer (I'll cover that in a few moments). What I'm talking about here are misplaced souls in society;

The Goober - Sadly, some of them are so gone, so very, very out there that it's just too dam painfully obvious that they don't fit in this realm. Although unbalanced, the shifty-eyed Goober has the potential to be the most imaginative of the lot. Problem is, they're gone. I submit that if you're much more near-at-hand to the border of reality it's a good idea that you should shun these folk. They're weird. They're unsettled. They don't make a good impression on people and, truth to tell, they may well be dangerous. Their eyes either dart, stare into space, or penetrate you coldly as they talk, usually with a lisp or in some other annoying or eerie fashion, about things you're not even slightly interested in or just would rather not speak of. Personally, I find these unbalanced individuals bothersome and would rather avoid them.

The Dreamer - Ah, now these are the main corps of gamers. This person is one who yearns to be free from the shackles and chains of Fate yet is destined to never achieve this subjective Utopian state. Normally a sturdy individual, he or she sometimes finds it a strain to deal with the numerous aspects of reality. If I knew better and could dare to be so bold, I would propose that this type of person could very well be the reincarnation of an adventuresome sort from an entirely different era in time. Dreamers are creative individuals and are usually the visionaries in an otherwise stifled community. This type of player will "normally" initiate good role-playing, have good ideas and mesh well with the group, knowing whether to lead or follow, fight or flee. I say normally in the previous sentence because there are actually two types of Dreamers. There are the *idealists* (one who thrives on good storytelling) and the *egocentrics* (who's characters must be the strongest, toughest, meanest, perhaps most powerful, etc.). Too many egocentrics and your sessions may quickly turn into a controversy or a ferocious soiree among the characters consummating in one or more deaths. Yow. A good enough Gamemaster should be able to take control of this situation and remedy it expedi-

ently.

The Simple-Minded - Last, these are people who can take role-playing or leave it. This is the occasional gamer. Usually they play because they're bored or because their other friends are playing. They understand gaming, to a degree, but are always normally the silent lackeys who are good for nothing else but cannon-fodder. By all means, I suggest involving a couple of these stalwart individuals in your session. They're quick to leap into the fray and will typically go along with the trend of the game. However, don't look for these fellows to commence in much of anything but hostility, greed, and lust. These people may make a character and then spend endless hours going through your comics, your CD's, or glued to MTV and not listening to a word the Gamemaster just said. If this happens, just kill 'em off real quick. Either they'll straighten up or they'll quit playing. Either way, you're better off.

As far as my experienced ventures go, I sense that these are the main types of gamers. These are who play.

But, why do they play? As stated, except for the occasional gamer, the Simple-Minded, these unfortunates are suffering from being in the wrong era. Now, I'm not saying that these people would be better off in the year 1192 but wouldn't it be fun to stick 'em there for a month and see what happens (hey, I know I'm talking about you and me but we could always send someone else first). I'm simply stating that the Dreamers and the Goobers feel ill at ease with today's reality and yearn for an escape. Role-playing is much more than just a game. It's a getaway, a freedom from worry, care and responsibility. It makes us dream and smile and it gives us something to talk about. The defensible adage for those accused by supercilious cavilers is that, "It's just a game!" We can let them go on thinking that. Sure. But you and I both know it's more than just dice, boards, spinning the wheel and playing pieces. It's the mind. It's imagination. It is *Creo Imagonem.*

How should you role-play? I'm about to submit my own sound and personal belief on this topic and nothing more. Since you're reading this, I assume you'll consider these words for they make good sense. Role-playing is acting. To be a good role-player, you must be a halfway decent actor. Acting and gaming go hand-in-hand. In either, you must project yourself into another role, an entirely separate personality, no matter how analogous you and your character may be. Sidney Penn and Churlak of the Three Fingers are simply two different persons and that is the basis to go by. Sid's gotta close his eyes for a moment and visualize what the heck Churlak's gonna do when three clacking and moaning zombies come clawing out of the earth at his feet. Alright, well, that's easy. But, what's Churlak going to do when a large and sweaty silk merchant escorted by thirteen city guards blabbers, "He's the one that took my baubles and bedded my daughters!!" or a mighty lord with a jewel-encrusted, fiery longsword on a pawing and snorting warhorse and his three mounted knights with glistening sharp lances and glowing armor say, "What are you doing trespassing on my land?" Now, those conditions take a little bit of acting don't you think? Churlak can't just say, "Wudn't me," or "I'm just hanging out, man." Sidney's got to act. He's got to role-play through the situation. To do this, he must act.

I once had a new gamer come to our session and he about flipped when we began to speak in the tongues of our characters. He stared, dumbfounded, and when I asked him what was wrong, he said, "I've never seen people do it that way."

"Do what?" I replied.

"Act it out."

"Well, how do you do it?"

"We just say what we're gonna do and we do it," he told me simply.

"Hmmm," I considered. "Sounds kind of boring."

Needless to say, after several minutes, this particular fellow was having his 4th level Ranger copping attitudes, blaring curse-laden interjections and consorting with the other characters. He was acting, and enjoying it. Afterwards, he said, "I'm definitely playing with you guys again!"

He had fun, and that tells me something. It tells me *how* to role-play. Act, improvise and, by all means, bend, twist and break the rules to meet your needs. They're not engraved in stone and should never be.

But, I'll tell you something that chafes my spirit. Sounds painful, I know, but I'm an implacable writer, to say the very least. It's the idea, in the premise of some games, of alignments and the corrupting thereof. Alignments, according to *AD&D*, are "a guide to his (the character's) basic moral and ethical attitudes toward others, society, good, evil, and the forces of the universe in general". All in all, this is a character's *universal fiber*, as I call it, and it's the mainframe of which to go by when you are role-playing and enacting any

interchange within the realm of the adventure, campaign, scenario, story, or whatever. The chafing of my spirit is a result of people not being able to adhere to their choice of principles for their character. There's nothing worse than a character who is a temperamental hothead in one session, the next he's a mellow fellow and the next, he's an arrogant snob. What gives? Obviously a person who can't, or won't, attempt consistency. I'm sorry but that is a paramount factor in being an adept role-player, otherwise your character is nothing but a confusing, schizoid lunatic who, in the long run, will never be able to reflect and make more than a handful's sense of his life.

If you can say, "Hey, that appears to be a personal predicament of mine!" my advice, if you sincerely wish to rectify this common problem, is to close your eyes and really try to cast yourself into your character's persona. You are no longer you. Become your character. Talk as he would talk. Act as he would act. You must truly strive for coherence. That's what good acting is all about. Robert DeNiro is rumored to research his roles so deeply that for several weeks before filming he actually lives like his character lives, talks like they talk, eats what they eat, whatever, and he does this night and day. DeNiro becomes that character. To aid you in this endeavor, choose your character's universal fiber with scrupulous intent. Alignment, or any other name it is given in your choice of game, is an assist to role-playing and should be utilized that way. Don't opt for one that will be tough to role play, unless you're up to the challenge, because it just won't, in most cases, be very fun. A player who chooses unappealing principles will most likely end up playing a different alignment anyway.

This article's intent was to make you aware of what kind of people endeavor in RPG's (role-playing games) and just what is the best way to go about it. If you follow all that I've said here and you apply it the next time you find yourself with a piece of paper, a chewed-up writing utensil, and a sweaty grip on various polyhedron die, and you're successful, then you're better for it. Good job. Let me know if I helped.

Creo Imagonem.

"C'MON PLAY SERIOUS..."
NO!.... SUPERMAN WOULD NOT USE HIS X-RAY VISION TO LOOK THROUGH LOIS LANE'S CLOTHING!
DC HEROES
OH, NO... HERE WE GO AGAIN!
D.CLARKE '92

MUSEUM REPLICAS LIMITED™

By Tony Parsons

Greetings to all! 'Tis I, the All-Powerful Gaming Fool, bringing you some valuable information, as always. I shall begin with a small diddy of a story. As my massive army approached the gates of the tyrannical Overlord of All Things Slimy and Grotesque (like that slime that comes from our brother, the slug -EWWW!), I noticed that my illustrious force had *no* armor or weapons!! The evil ones within the dark fortress began to cheer gleefully obviously taking quick note of our lack of supplies. I thought, "Hmmm - whatever shall I, THE ALMIGHTY GAMING FOOL, do?" Then my hand slid deep into my shifty pocket and I drew forth my much-used manual that was entitled *Museum Replicas Limited*. HA! Lickety-split, I filled out the order-form and sent it with one of my able-bodied couriers. While he carried my order to these adroit fellows who had come to my rescue more than once before, I stalled for time. Being the supreme force that I am, I enthralled the enemy with a sensational dance routine that ended with a smashing finale involving four monkeys and a camel. Upon the trumpet's annoying blare and the roaring cheers of my faithful men resounding mightily throughout the morning air, my courier returned with weapons and armor of the finest make! I breathed a quiet sigh of relief, even though I knew that this would come to pass for I am *All-Knowing*, you see, and fit upon my person a suit of first-rate armor and a meticulously wrought Sugar Loaf Great Helm (see page 16 of *Museum Replicas Limited*). To make a long story short, I defeated the Overlord with a series of brilliant military moves (what could one expect from someone of my nature?) and emancipated the oppressed and grateful populace of which ever land that was (I don't remember). A true victory for THE GAMING FOOL, wouldn't you say?! Of course, don't take my word, even though that is a wise choice and you should, witness the wise words of Hank Reinhardt, Vice President of Atlanta Cutlery.

"When you get edged weapon replicas from our catalog, you can count on receiving Exact copies of actual weapons in the great collections of the world, such as the Metropolitan Museum in New York and the National Museum of Copenhagen. What sets our weapons apart is that our swords, for example, holds its edge, flexes just right, and could stand up to the rigors of actual combat. Our swords have the right size, weight and dimensions - they're completely authentic and battle-ready. That's why, for the past 8 years, thousands of re-enactors, history buffs, and arms and armour collectors have preferred Museum Replicas products.

"This is the largest catalog we've ever offered and it's full of new choices for you to consider. You'll find swords from the Tower of London Collection copied with their gracious permission and assistance. Archers can choose between our English Longbow and our new Eastern Recurve Bow. Also be sure to see our Fantasy section where we feature dazzling new sets of fantasy armour for men and women.

"We hope you enjoy reviewing our current selection of history's great edged weapons and period accessories. Even though all of these products are made in small quantities and involve a great deal of skillful labor by craftsmen, we keep our prices as reasonable as possible so that you'll trade with us again, when it's time for you to add to your collection or period wardrobe."

Arena editor Joe Martin had this to say, "Whoa. Is this cool or what? Always have I yearned to wear a Celtic Cross around my neck, garbed in a Mail Hauberk and Shoulder Plates, wielding my favorite Northern European Sword and facing down my foe, who, of course, would be decked in the finest Leather Jerkin and Knee Breeches and tightly gripping a Basket Hilt Sword and Stag Handled Scottish Dirk. Whoa."

All these and legions more are offered by *Museum Replicas Limited*. The prices aren't inexpensive but they're reasonable enough considering that these are authentically made and even, according to Hank Reinhardt, battle-ready. Anyway, who wants a 15-year old street punk gallavanting around with a 36" Seljuq Turk Sabre? Not I. But if you're into "Battle-Ready Swords, Daggers, Axes, Shields & Helmets" then this Gaming Fool suggests calling toll free 1-800-883-8838 and, for $2.00, ordering your very own *Museum Replicas Limited* catalogue.

TRADING CARD NEWS

Vampires Throughout History

Brought to you by Acid Rain Studios, this timely 50-card set offers an intriguing and informative look at these popular creature's role through world history and literature. From Vampiric ancestors such as the ancient, tragic myth of Adam's first wife, Lilith, to the sultry and seductive Vampiress, Camarilla, this perfect set gives the reader a well-researched collection that goes beyond the common knowledge and characters of Vampires today: Fritz Haarmann, the Hanover Vampire (1929), Sergeant Bertrand, 74th Regiment of the French Army (1849), and, of course, the original Dracula, Prince Vlad Tepes, infamous ruler of the Romanian province, Transylvania (erratically from 1448 to 1476). Haunting black and white illustrations by Mark Paniccia highlighted with blood red borders. The flipside gives a historical account of each character. A must for all Vampire collectors! Ships in December.

Zombies For Christmas

A one time only release especially for the holidays from Fantaco and Tundra, check out the *Zombie War Trading Cards* based upon the cult-favorite comic book series! They're all-new, all-action and all-color with paintings by genre great Charles Lang and story by **Kevin Eastman** (*TMNT*) and Tom Skulan. This roaring action is offered in a regualer set as well as two special limited collector's sets! The series of 45 cards showcases a diverse battle in a mammoth global conflagration comprising tanks, artillery, zombie soldiers, UFOs, zombie jets, missiles, nuclear detonations and zombies! According to Fantaco, there will be no overruns or relists of this collection...ever. Ask for it by name!

Spider-Man Keepsake Collection

Spider-Man, Venom and introducing Carnage, the evil spawn of Venom, starring in a bold new *Keepsake Collection* from Comic Images. There are six oversized black and white cards; three featuring Carnage poses, and three featuring the Amazing Spider-Man cover art for issues #361, #362, and #363. The seventh card is a full-color mini-press sheet featuring the six designs at actual trading card size. Plus, Comic Images is including a special bonus **PRISM** card in every *Keepsake*!

A Nude Trend Developing?

Since last year's success of *Thee Dollhouses of America*, a trend has been surfacing on explicit nudes in trading cards. In order to achieve success, the manufacturers have produced the highest quality premium cards that they can (we're talking high quality here!). Sales on these sets have been quite strong; hence, the emergence of a multitude of choices. Because of great demand, these cards are being offered at low prices. Look for a new player, Clubhouse Diamonds with their own high

quality nude dancer cards and look for a set from another well-known men's magazine.

Hot Collector Card News

Here's the big scoop on the *1993 TSR Collector Card* line-up. It's going to blow your socks off and they're going to blow off the shelves!

Here's what's new...

Three sets will be released instead of two. each release will contain 165 different regular cards and 20 "chase" cards. The factory set will be released in November.

The *1993 Chase Card Program* is entirely new! Check it out: 60 chase cards are in the complete 1993 card set. They have their own numbering system, separate from the primary card set, for easy collecting. One third of the chase cards will be in each of the 3 releases. There is approximately one rare card in every 2 foil packages. The 60 chase card set contains 9 foil cards, 2 pressure sensitive sticker cards and 1 hologram card!

A special ruby-bordered card will be placed in each 12-card pack. The "ruby" card is the same as its gold-bordered counterpart. This will encourage "ruby" card collecting, too. The specially bordered factory set will contain 495 regular cards, plus the foil, sticker, and hologram cards. It will NOT contain the other 48 chase cards!

TSR artists supply the art. You're going to see even more from Easley, Caldwell, Fields, Brom, Ruppel, and Elmore... just what you want! The front cover of the cards has been redesigned for a whole new look, too.

Pinnacle By Score

Look for the NFL stars of tomorrow in Pinnacle's new *1992 NFL Football Player Cards*. It's got twenty-five regular player cards plus two gold-stamped *Team 2000* cards, from a special set of 30, found in every Super Pack. You'll find more than 20 rookie cards photographed in their NFL jerseys and Sidelines, Idols, and Gamewinners cards that make great subsets! Sports fans will be at a loss if they miss this fabulous-looking set of cards!

Basketball Card Delay

Earlier this year, Classic games signed LSU superstar Shaquille O'Neal to an exclusive contract for its 1992 basketball card set.

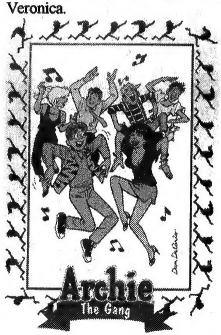
At the time, the Big Shack Attack was unsigned as an NBA player, so essentially Classic had an exclusive with an ex-college player. When O'Neal signed a contract with NBA's Olando Magic, however, a small clause that is found in every NBA contract states that his likeness becomes part of NBA Properties. Card manufacturers (or any other NBA licensee for that matter - posters, T-shirts, etc.) then have the right to use any of the NBA players.

Sounds simple? Well, ordinarily it is, but Classic's agreement actually superceded the NBA's guidelines. Rather than fight a long battle in court over contract rights (and believing that Classic erred unknowingly), the other NBA card manufacturers have agreed to allow the deal to stand.

It would seem, then, that this type of behavior has been approved by all parties involved. That is not the case, however. Licensees pay very high amounts for all NBA players, and this type of arrangement can severely damage sales. According to Chris Malone, an NBA official who works closely with the trading card manufacturers, "If this type of situation arises again, the player in question will not play in this league." The league does not want to face the controversy surrounding the NFL and its decertified players' union.

SkyBox Solicits Archie Cards

The ageless teenager finally has is own trading card! Skybox, the industry leader in comic cards will release card set showcasing Archie Andrews and the entire Riverdale gang. Included in the 120-card set are nine special subsets, a nine-card picture puzzle featuring art by Archie fan favorite Dan DeCarlo, six randomly packaged holograms, and one extremely limited multi-image hologram of Archie, Betty, and Veronica.



We need more letters . . .

and a name for this page!

Dear Arena Mag,

Let me start out by saying your magazine is the best on the stands. It beats *Wizard* by a mile! You have good articles & interviews, nice covers and everything else is perfect. So far I've read each issue cover to cover (never read *Wizard* cover to cover).

One thing I really like is that the news is usually up to date and there's more of it. The Preview page is a good idea, you should do more. I like the fact you try to cover the small publishers and not only the big two, Valiant, Dark Horse and Image. Small guys deserve more exposure. You also don't have a Marvel slant like *Wizard* seems to have. Don't get me wrong, I enjoy most of *Wizard*.

Suggestion time. How about reviews of new #1s from big & small publishers (you can only find out so much about a small press #1 from *Advance* or *Previews*). Sometimes you miss something good because you have no idea what it looks like in the catalog.

Trivia and fan art would also be a good idea. Maybe a little more color, but not necessary.

Jared Christie
Buffalo, NY

Let me honestly say, thanks. But we're not trying to compete directly with Wizard magazine. We feel that Arena has filled a niche in the market and we're happy with what we're doing here. That doesn't mean we're complacent. Arena will always be improving with each and every issue being better than the last. We hope you think so, too.

Dear Arena,

First, I want to thank you for telling the comics world about Blue Comet Press' new parent company being Heroic Publishing.

It was very accurate, and it appeared you really knew about BCP and our books. Next, I want to say that taking out the Price Guide was the best idea you have had, with *Wizard, Comic Buyer's Guide*, and *Overstreet, Comic Values Monthly*, that's all we need, More Values!

But most importantly, comics that are top quality from under-financed companies that can't smother the fans with ads are seen in *Arena Magazine*! Bravo! I am so sick of the "major" fan papers, and magazines, that completely ignore smaller companies! Some of the best comics made are coming from companies that can afford to publish, but can't flood the market with ads!

Although all these fan mags will deny it, they will not use your press releases unless you buy ads from their magazines! The comics industry needs *Arena Magazine* and other such publications that aren't motivated by their advertising budget! I have heard *Buyer's Guide* scream that they don't do this, but when was the last time you saw a press release from a small quality publisher in their rag?!

My hope is that your publication becomes the standard, and that you continue to lead the market in being honest to your readers and giving all quality publishers equal space!

Next, I'd like to give some very good advice. Don't change your format to a more costly version! $3.50 is an excellent price for a news magazine. Keep your format down to the b&w version, chocked full of news from ALL publishers! Also, use as many pages as you need for interviews! *Wizard Mag* is a perfect example of interviews that are too short and that never ask anything but the most known questions! You can't learn a thing.

Thanks for being the Number One info outlet for Independent publishers, and comics!

Make A Wish,
Craig Stormon
Pres., Blue Comet Press
Manhattan Beach, CA

Gracias, Craig! It seems that Arena is coming across just how we imagined it would. That's good, and we feel exactly the same way you do. Alternate publishers don't have all the capital required to promote their products as thoroughly as the larger companies. That's where Arena steps in. We cover it ALL, big and small alike. If you do want to buy an ad though, our prices are the only ones that won't put you out on the street. Let's say, a full page is still cheaper than a used car!

Dear Arena,

Just picked up issue #3. I noticed the new packaging. I like it. Great cover art.

The news section was really large which was nice to see and had a lot of interesting news. I really enjoyed the Gary Barker interview because it was quite long and showed a lot of his work throughout the interview. The Deathstroke/ Peacemaker miniseries sounds interesting and I like seeing some of his original art from this miniseries. I'd still like you guys to at least try and show what the artist looks like. Maybe a picture.

The Whilce Portacio interview was good, and it was nice to hear about his new miniseries, *Wetworks*.

The trading card section and the industry news were both very enjoyable sections. I'm also glad that there is NO price guide in *Arena*, because almost every magazine has a price guide.

Overall, not a bad issue. Also, it's great to see future covers of upcoming issues in issue #3. Keep up the good work.

Peter Fisico
Richmond Hill, Ontario
Canada

Peter, the Deathstroke/ Peacemaker miniseries will be appearing in DC's new 12-issue makiseries, Showcase '93. Check it out because it looks pretty nifty.

And so, in a short span here we have two votes against a price guide! Hmmm. I can admit that we haven't received one letter saying, "Where's the damn price guide?!" Cool. Matter of fact, doesn't anybody out there dislike our magazine? If you do, write! We're sick of all this ego-stroking!

Either way, keep sending us letters! We love getting mail! Hup to it!

The winner of the *Hugh Haynes Original Art Giveaway* is (drum roll)...

Tony M. Hogan!

Yes, Tony Hogan of Lithia Springs, GA will receive an autographed original page by *Nexus* and *Punisher* artist, *Hugh Haynes*! Yowza!

Okay, as I promised several issues ago. Here's your votes for the...

...TEN MOST POPULAR TSR CHARACTERS

10. **Kitiara Majere of Dragonlance**
9. **Strahd Von Zarovich of Ravenloft**
8. **Tasslehoff Burrfoot of Dragonlance**
7. **Wulfgar of the Forgotten Realms**
6. **Laurana of Dragonlance**
5. **Lord Soth of Dragonlance/ Ravenloft**
4. **Flint Fireforge of Dragonlance**
3. **Sturm Brightblade of Dragonlance**
2. **Drizzt Du'Orden of the Forgotten Realms**
1. **Raistlin Majere of Dragonlance Fame**

That's it! There were some other votes that came close to making the list. Prominent among them were Bruenor Battlehammer of Forgotten Realms, Caramon Majere of Dragonlance, Elminster the Sage, Kelemvor of Forgotten Realms, and Prince Camrick of Forgotten Realms. Other votes of interest include Gord the Rogue of Greyhawk, Artemis Entreri of Forgotten Realms, Cydric Bane of Forgotten Realms, Palin of Dragonlance and even a couple votes for Bupu and Sestun, Gully Dwarves from the Dragonlance series! But the above list is what I've compiled. A couple more votes could have changed some of the standings entirely. Bruenor almost made it to #10. But, this is the way it is. Looks like Dragonlance pretty much dominates, seven out of ten. At least, according to *Arena* readers. What do you think?

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ARENA MAGAZINE

Tales of The Lance

Image Trading Card Inserted

Museum Replicas Limited

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